

# THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

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EPISODES OF THE MONTH

THE EDITOR

THE CASE FOR ITALIAN WORKERS IN BRITISH MINES  
THE RIGHT HON. ALFRED ROBENS, M.P.

MASTERS IN OUR OWN HOUSE?  
BERNARD BRAINE, M.P.

MR. CHURCHILL IN WASHINGTON DENYS SMITH

THE CHINESE THREAT TO BURMA E. C. V. FOUCAR

THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AND THE  
FRENCH UNION JOHN BIGGS-DAVISON

NAUTICAL OCCASIONS ERIC GILLET

AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE HON. JOHN GRIGG, ERIC  
NEWTON, JOHN STEWART COLLIS, I. GEIKIE COBB, ROGER  
MORGAN, ARNOLD LUNN, RUBY MILLAR, AND ALEC ROBERTSON.

*PUBLISHED MONTHLY*

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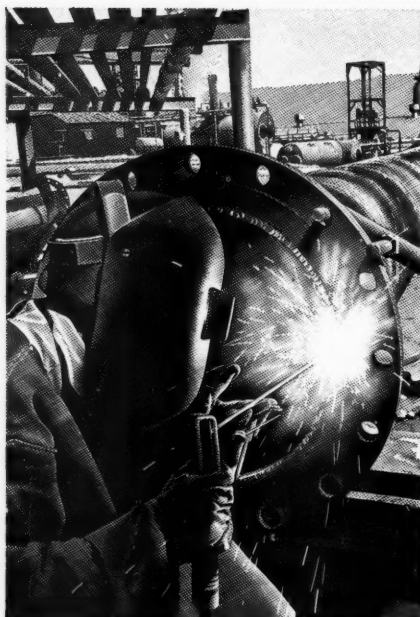
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## EPISODES OF THE MONTH

IT is unlikely that anything will happen in the last few days of January to overshadow the importance of Mr. Churchill's visit to the United States and Canada. Before he left for North America he was careful to say that too much should not be expected of his mission; and on arrival in New York he emphasised the same point and said that it would "be a question of creating a friendly attitude and getting ourselves a little above that paper level on which there is so much correspondence . . ."

In this, and also in a number of detailed, practical ways, the visit seems to have been an outstanding success.

### "Us and We"

ON a later page will be found Denys Smith's eye-witness account of Mr. Churchill's impact upon Washington, and in particular upon Congress. When reading this, it is impossible not to feel that Mr. Churchill is making a contribution to human progress which no other man could make. His vitality, his imagination, his eloquence, his wit and his immense capacity for work are obvious reasons for this: but his greatest service—his work for Anglo-American friendship—has been providentially assisted by another cause.

He is much more than *pro*-American: he is *half* American. This single fact has already had an incalculable effect upon the course of history, and it was aptly symbolised when he was admitted to membership of the Society of the Cincinnati, on account of his descent from an officer who had served in Washington's Army. In accepting this honour, Mr. Churchill said:—

It . . . seems to me that, when the events took place which this society commemorates, I was on both sides in the war between us and we.

Those who tend to underrate the human factor in history would do well to ponder the significance of Mr. Churchill's mixed ancestry in the gradual reconciliation of the English-speaking world.

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### The Right Form of Union

SOME people (with whom we do not at all agree) were disappointed that Mr. Churchill did not use his great natural advantage, and his persuasive skill, to promote a federal union of the Atlantic community. In fact he went out of his way, in his great speech to Congress, to explain that neither Britain nor the Commonwealth would look at federation.

What matters most in Europe is not the form of fusion but the number of armoured divisions, the size of the air force and the quality of the weapons available for defence . . . the British Commonwealth is not prepared to become a State or a group of States in any continental federal system, on either side of the Atlantic.

This admirably clear declaration is in no sense a setback to the cause of closer unity between like-minded peoples. It is simply a reminder to federalists in America and in Europe that the Commonwealth is a world-wide association of peoples already in being; that its members are not prepared to sacrifice their freedom in order to join a more restricted circle, with a rigid constitution; and that they believe so strongly that their own form of union is right that they can confidently recommend it as a pattern for others.

### Understanding of the Commonwealth

DURING and since Mr. Churchill's visit American understanding of the Commonwealth has been visibly growing. He has had, on the whole, a very good Press, and several of the most distinguished American commentators have urged that the British aversion to federal entanglements should be respected and approved.

General Eisenhower has also given his blessing to the Commonwealth's special status and character. Speaking publicly on January 22, he said:

With Britain's world-wide responsibilities, with the world-wide nature of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and with the strength of its ties demonstrated many times, a political and economic union already exists. It is a part of our existence to-day, and I think it is a fine thing. How can you combine that with Western Europe to-day? I can't see it personally.

This statement is all the more important in view of the fact that General Eisenhower is now openly in the running for the American Presidency. He has always been a soldier with political attributes; now perhaps he must be regarded as a politician who happens also to be holding a key command. That he is able to maintain this dual nature is remarkable evidence of his capacity for inspiring trust.

### A New Emphasis

CONTINUITY of policy in foreign and defence matters is the aim, and very largely the practice, of British statesmen. Nevertheless Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden have clearly thought it necessary to restate

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British Far Eastern policy with a new emphasis. Our official attitude towards China has become markedly firmer and less equivocal.

In his speech to Congress Mr. Churchill said that "whatever diplomatic divergences there (might) be from time to time about procedure," he was glad that the United States would "not allow Chinese anti-Communists on Formosa to be invaded and massacred from the mainland." He also said that if a truce were reached in Korea, and were then broken by the Chinese, the "joint response" of Britain and the United States would be "prompt, resolute and effective."

Mr. Eden had previously spoken in similar terms when he received an honorary degree and delivered a lecture at Columbia University on January 11. All good men hoped that there would be an armistice in Korea and that this would be followed by a political settlement in that country. "But even this would not give us a Far Eastern settlement." The struggle was going on in Indo-China and Malaya.

These positions must be held. It should be understood that intervention . . . by Chinese Communists in South-East Asia—even if they were called volunteers—would create a situation no less menacing than that which the United Nations met and faced in Korea. In any such event the United Nations should be equally solid to resist it.

We are sure that statements such as these have helped to remove doubt and misunderstanding in a vital sector of Anglo-American relations.

### Checking the Communist Tide in Asia

ONE of the silliest of Socialist propaganda gambits has been to depict the Americans as reckless and irresponsible in the Far East, and Mr. Attlee as an angel of peace and moderation who, by conferring with President Truman, was able to avert a general war against Communist China.

Of course the Americans have made their mistakes in the Far East: but so have we, and the Labour Government, when it gave *de jure* recognition to Communist China with such indecent haste, and without adequate consultation, undoubtedly provided a most harmful spectacle of Allied disagreement. The Americans have had a fair grievance against us about this; and although a policy of unlimited support for Chiang Kai-Shek would no longer be (if indeed it ever was) realistic, the need for a firm Allied front against Chinese aggression was never greater than it is to-day. It is absurd for Socialists to talk as if the danger of extending the war in the Far East came primarily from the Americans and ourselves, and not from the Chinese. The Chinese are extending the scope of their aggressive and subversive activities without scruple, and with a large measure of success (as witness the article on Burma which we publish this month); and we can only hope to check them if we treat them as serious enemies rather than as potential deviationists.

**China and Yugoslavia: A False Analogy**

THE case of Tito is apt to mislead many people, who fail to take account of the difference between him and Mao, and between China and Yugoslavia. Unlike Tito, Mao was never beholden to the West at any stage in his struggle for power; and his ideological prejudice is probably fortified by racial fanaticism. Soviet Russia, because of her ambiguous geographical position, can exploit the anti-European feeling which is rampant throughout Asia, while herself enjoying a relative immunity from its effects. But Western peoples have to face, in the present rulers of China, men who may be expected to dislike the colour of their skins quite as much as the colour of their politics.

Another point which should not be forgotten is that China is an infinitely stronger power than Yugoslavia, and that she has therefore much less reason to fear the domination of Russia. The two giants of Communism can live and work together within the framework of their common faith, and neither need feel in any immediate danger of being overwhelmed by the other. But if Yugoslavia had stayed in the Communist *bloc*, she could only have done so as the slave and chattel of Russia. Tito had to make an awkward choice; Mao can indulge Chinese nationalism and racialism to the full, without running any serious risk of a clash with Stalin.

**Reorganisation in Malaya**

MR. LYTTTELTON, the Colonial Secretary, who had recently returned from a tour of inspection in the Far East, announced on January 15 that General Sir Gerald Templer would succeed the late Sir Henry Gurney as High Commissioner for the Federation of Malaya, and that he would assume full responsibility for military and police operations, as well as for the civil administration. At a Press conference arranged to coincide with this announcement, Mr. Lyttelton mentioned General Templer's qualifications and spoke at some length on the situation in Malaya.

He said that political advance was being held up not by us, but by the terrorists, and that the first duty of government was to secure law and order. This would not be "a quick job," but he believed that measures could be taken to accelerate it. There should be stronger Chinese representation in the civil service and police, and he obviously had in mind a "very considerable" reorganisation of the police. A Chinese Home Guard was desirable, with a purely static and defensive rôle. It was important not to waste troops in a country where the task was not, in the strict sense, military. "Many changes have got to be made, and it is going to be some time before they can be made." Eventually "we shall get right on top of this affair."

We wish Mr. Lyttelton, General Templer and others concerned the best of luck in this arduous and challenging work. May their efforts be successful sooner than they dare hope.



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### The Americans and Suez

ONE of Mr. Churchill's most daring suggestions to Congress was that "token forces of other partners" (including the United States) might be "stationed in the (Suez) Canal Zone as a symbol of the unity of purpose which inspires us."

It must be admitted that the Americans have not been sound in their handling of Middle Eastern affairs since 1945. Our own mistakes have been numerous and regrettable: but we have been handicapped by American failure to understand our position and the international issues involved. Our present most unenviable function in the Canal Zone is not simply to defend our rights under a treaty, which has been unilaterally and illegally denounced: it is also to protect and keep open a waterway in which the shipping of the whole world is interested. In the former rôle we surely deserve at least the moral support of our Allies and of all fair-minded nations; and in the latter we might well receive some more tangible form of help. Hence Mr. Churchill's reference to "token forces."

### An Heir for King Farouk

WE have never failed to stress that the only hope of ending the present Anglo-Egyptian tension is that the monarchy in Egypt may be able to triumph over faction and corruption. Only King Farouk can save his country from the perils into which it is being plunged by the Wafdist Government. We must therefore watch with eager curiosity for any strengthening of the King's position.

The birth of an heir on January 16 was certainly a great reinforcement to the monarchy. No event could have been more popular and, in a time of crisis, it must be deeply gratifying to the King to feel that the direct succession is assured. To him and to Queen Narriman we offer our respectful congratulations.

Another very important step was taken at the end of December, when the King appointed Afifi Pasha to be Chief of the Royal Cabinet and Amr Pasha to be adviser on foreign affairs attached to the Royal Cabinet. Both these men have held the post of Ambassador in London (Amr Pasha, it will be remembered, was recalled last December), and both are generally respected for their integrity and moderation. We will not speculate concerning the possible significance of these appointments, but they can be assumed to have brought new strength to the monarchy.

### The Position of Lord Salisbury

DURING the absence in North America of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden, it was arranged that the chair at Cabinet meetings should be taken by Mr. Crookshank, Leader of the House of Commons. The appointment of a Deputy Prime Minister was carefully avoided, and this

may perhaps be regarded as reasonable. But it is very hard to see why Lord Salisbury was not asked to preside at Cabinet meetings, as well as to "assist at the Foreign Office."

We would be the last to disparage Mr. Crookshank in any way; indeed we have recently had occasion to praise him very warmly. But it must be stated, without disrespect to Mr. Crookshank, that Lord Salisbury had a stronger claim to act as chairman of the Cabinet. He has had more experience of high office; he has been Government or Opposition Leader in the House of Lords for many years; and he has as high a political reputation as it is possible for any man to have who has never made the slightest attempt to become a popular figure.

Lord Salisbury is without doubt one of the most distinguished Conservative statesmen of the present century; and even though the public may not yet fully recognise this fact, his colleagues at least should.

#### The Steel Shortage

THE welcome news that Britain is to receive a million tons of steel, as a result of the Washington talks, does not alter the fact that this vital raw material will remain in short supply for a number of months to come. It is inevitable that the system of allocation now being enforced by the Ministry of Supply should have become the target for a large volume of criticism, since no such system can overcome two radical difficulties. First, it is impossible to allocate supplies of steel equitably when the purposes for which steel is required are so numerous. Secondly, the statistical records on which the allocations have largely been based ceased to be collected in 1950. Any system of direct controls, as Conservatives frequently pointed out when in opposition, tends to favour old-established companies at the expense of those who have recently increased their output or their efficiency.

None the less, the Ministry has probably done its best in the circumstances, and it certainly cannot be accused of having failed to consult representatives of industries who are steel consumers. There is, of course, always the danger that such consultations will result in a "vertical" system, which benefits the larger concerns at the expense of the smaller; but it has on the other hand to be remembered that some degree of sub-allocation is quite unavoidable. The Ministry of Supply simply cannot make direct allocations to thousands of small businesses. In any case, it has been decided that the allocations announced for the period February 4 to March 31 will definitely not be altered. Allocations for the subsequent period are still provisional, and firms which produce goods for export, or which are undertaking rearmament contracts, may well find their supplies increased. Of course the Ministry, in deciding the amounts of steel to be allocated, has to take into account the considerable stocks which are still held by many consumers. In these conditions it is really pointless for small businesses to try to "jump the queue" by making representations to their M.Ps. about the inadequacy of their allocations. Still more reprehensible is the behaviour

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of one or two trades associations, which have rushed into print about the steel shortage in order to attract new members to their ranks. The best interests of British industry are not served by mere window-dressing of this kind.

### Mr. Robens on the Coal Crisis

LAST month we stated that, in our view, the only short-term answer to this country's coal problem was that "thousands of Italians should as soon as possible be allowed to come in and take the place of our own compatriots who have left the mining industry." This opinion is endorsed in our leading article this month by Mr. Alfred Robens, who served in the late Government at the Ministries of Labour and Fuel and Power, and who has many miners among his constituents. "How," he asks, "can we . . . produce the amount (of coal) needed? The answer is manpower. Can we get the extra manpower from entirely British sources? The plain answer is, no."

We admire Mr. Robens for his candour and we wish that all British politicians, and all who are responsible for keeping the public informed, would be equally forthright and realistic. It is only fair to add that the Government of which Mr. Robens was a member conspicuously failed, in practice, to tackle this vital problem. We must hope that a Conservative Government will be more vigorous in its approach, and more successful.

### Gold and Dollar Gloom

THE figures of the sterling area's gold and dollar deficit for the last quarter of 1951 are profoundly depressing. The deficit of 934 million dollars is the largest recorded in any quarter, and at this rate the remaining reserves would be used up in less than nine months. By next September, unless the position can be rectified, the £ sterling will only be worth whatever individual nations choose to pay for it.

The deficit for the last quarter of last year, even after allowance has been made for the 176 million dollars spent towards the repayment of the American Loan, remains more than twice as great as the surplus for the first quarter. It is indeed most depressing to compare the figures for 1951 with those for 1949, the year of devaluation. The deficits for the second and third quarters of 1949—that is to say the quarters which immediately preceded the decision to devalue—each resulted in a smaller drain on the sterling area's gold and dollar reserves than the deficit for October 1951 alone, when allowance is made for the large sums we were receiving by way of Marshall Aid during the earlier period.

It is true that the figures for the months of November and December 1951 were distinctly better than those for October: yet a continuous drain even at the December rate would exhaust the reserves in under a year.

Who is to Blame ?

IT is most important that Conservatives should be clear as to how far the last Government is responsible for this grave situation. We, for our part, have never doubted that any Government elected in 1945 would have had to face a grave dollar problem, and that it was vital, as soon as the war ended, to take immediate steps in order to strengthen the trading position of the sterling area.

We cannot agree with those economists, of whom Mr. R. F. Harrod is perhaps the most prominent, who have talked as though it were wrong to speak of a "dollar problem," since the deficit only reflected the extent to which Great Britain, as the banker of the sterling area, was living beyond her means. In other words, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer had only to equate total supply and total demand (in Mr. Harrod's view by ruthlessly pruning capital expenditure) and the "dollar problem" would instantly be resolved.

We cannot regard this view as plausible: but in rejecting it we do not commit ourselves to the equally mistaken view that Socialist financial policy has not very considerably aggravated our difficulties. On the contrary, we are quite convinced that the level of Government expenditure since 1945 has made the problem of our balance of payments very much more intractable than it would otherwise have been. It stands to reason that a state of affairs in which too much money is chasing too few goods must have the effect both of encouraging imports and of discouraging the incentive to export. Furthermore, practical experience has shown only too clearly that this view is correct.

1947 and 1951 are the two years since the war in which prices have risen most rapidly and in which the threat of rampant inflation has been most acute. In each of these years not only did the gold and dollar reserves of the sterling area dwindle most alarmingly, but in addition Britain herself incurred a heavy trading deficit with the rest of the world.

Commonwealth Conference

THE communiqué issued at the close of the recent conference of Commonwealth Finance Ministers certainly contains some encouraging features. In the first place, its tone of sober optimism is very welcome at a time when sterling is under such heavy pressure: the Ministers who have taken part in the conference are "confident that this situation can be set right," and they will put before their respective Governments "certain definite proposals calculated in the aggregate to ensure that the sterling area as a whole will be in balance with the rest of the world in respect of the second half of 1952." Secondly, the long-term aspect of the problem has not been ignored: "we are strongly of the opinion," say the Ministers, "that measures taken to stop the drain upon reserves must form part of a long-term policy designed to restore and maintain the full strength of sterling." In this connection it is most encouraging to read that "the first and most essential step is to ensure that the internal economy (of

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each country concerned) is sound, and that all possible measures are taken to combat inflation." This is a courageous and welcome declaration, at a time when there is so much loose talk about the "age of inflation" and its inevitability. Even more important was Mr. Butler's unqualified statement, at a Press Conference, that there was "a great anxiety" among Commonwealth nations to adhere to the sterling area. It is good that the communiqué should have ended by reaffirming "the need for frequent and comprehensive consultation."

Perhaps the most doubtful paragraphs in the communiqué were those which dealt with the question of convertibility. It is surely an oversimplification to assert that the objective of making sterling strong will be more easily attained "when sterling is freely convertible into all the currencies of the world". The premature attempt at making sterling convertible in 1947 should serve as a warning. We would like to know what part Canada played in these discussions. It is much to be hoped that there will shortly be full debates in both Houses of Parliament when the session is resumed.

### Cuts Impending

**T**HERE remains the crying need for the present British Government to take positive steps which will limit the volume of consumption at home. Mr. Butler has recently stated that measures will shortly be announced which will "enable the economy to concentrate on its essential tasks." The experience of the last six years has shown how hopeless it is to rely overmuch on physical controls for this purpose. These controls must be accompanied by a financial policy which works in the same direction, and by a curtailment of Government expenditure. It is no good pretending that cuts will be popular: but the need for them is inescapable, and the longer they are postponed, the harder it will become to connect them in the public mind with the years of Socialist misrule.

### Fall in Gilt-edged

**T**HE fall in gilt-edged since the present Government took office has been serious. Such a fall not only affects the value of the assets held by a very large number of charitable organisations, and by trustees on behalf of many of the poorest members of the community, but it may also have the effect, unless it is checked, of encouraging speculation in Government securities. Such speculation has been a common enough occurrence in certain countries, and readers of David Ogg's excellent short biography of Louis XIV will remember his account of Mazarin's ingenious manipulations of the *Rentes*. But it has been much less common in Britain, and it is, therefore, somewhat alarming to hear of speculators who are confidently looking to the time when they can secure a yield of 5 per cent. through the purchase of gilt-edged.

Some fall in this section of the market was inevitable as a result of



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the rise in the Bank rate and Mr. Butler's other monetary measures. Even such a moderate tightening up of the money market meant a fairly heavy volume of selling, especially at the end of the year, when accounts had to be squared up.

We cannot help feeling, however, that the Treasury could and should take some special measures in order to see that this slide does not go too far. This is all the more important in view of the fact that the gilt-edged market has become so much larger, as a result of the last Government's nationalisation measures.

### Needs and Means

A RECENT publication, *The Social Services; Needs and Means*, by Ian Macleod, M.P., and J. Enoch Powell, M.P., is one of the most interesting publications which the Conservative Political Centre has published for a long time. Readers will find a very full and clear account of the evolution of the Social Services in this country, besides a useful definition and analysis of what the term "Social Service" means.

The most important part of the pamphlet, however, relates to the present position. The authors point out that

already the plans laid down by the Coalition Government, which sprang from the Beveridge Report, are becoming a patchwork. . . . National Assistance in the Beveridge and Coalition conception (and indeed in the 1945-48 Socialist legislation) was designed as protection for the small minority which even the most elaborate schemes of insurance must leave uncovered. It is eating its way now into all the Social Services.

The reason for this unwelcome development (which, as the authors shrewdly point out, may not be so unwelcome to Socialists) is not far to seek. The plans made by the Coalition Government were all based on the assumption—fantastically wrong, as things have turned out—that the price level after the war could be held relatively stable, whereas the level of unemployment might fluctuate appreciably.

### An Increase of Premia?

SINCE the National Insurance Act came into force there has been very little change in the level of insurance benefits. On the other hand, rising prices have caused the subsistence minimum for National Assistance payments to be steadily increased. It is therefore not surprising that the proportion of the population which is receiving supplementary assistance is steadily growing. At the same time, the level of employment has fluctuated so little that the decision last year to reduce the Exchequer contribution to the National Insurance Fund was economically sound, although entirely out of concordance with the fundamental ideas of the Beveridge scheme.

Altogether, few people can quarrel with one of the main conclusions



## EPISODES OF THE MONTH

of this pamphlet; that, if we are to resist the tendency towards "the replacement of National Insurance by National Assistance as the guarantee of security," then "the Insurance scheme can be restored only by an increase of premia, however that increase may be distributed over the three contributors—employer, employee and Exchequer." This stimulating survey should increase still further the considerable Parliamentary reputation which its authors enjoy.

### Lord Beveridge Faces the Future

ON December 30 Lord Beveridge broadcast a *Letter to Posterity*. He was speaking from Newton Aycliffe, the new satellite town in which he lives, where "everything . . . is still to make, and the leaders are still to find." This town is planned, Lord Beveridge thinks, broad-mindedly.

The first houses . . . have been allotted to what we call "key workers." . . . And we interpret the term "key worker" widely—and sensibly. We regard coal miners as key workers for the whole country, and so for us. When a vicar was appointed for the town, we treated him as a key worker. We set aside a house for him, and gave him an empty farm-house for his services till he could get a church built. The rector in his parsonage has become a key worker in a standard house. . . .

But the speaker's Liberal complacency is not altogether untinged with doubt. What of the future in this earthly paradise of social justice?

Just from where, in our classless collection of men and women, the leadership will come to make us a society with a sense of unity, in service to one another and to the world, I do not know. . . . Our leadership in Britain, in so far as it has been good, has depended not simply on personal qualities but on tradition. We have somehow to carry on an aristocratic tradition in Britain without the aristocrats.

Lord Beveridge is content to state this problem: he does not suggest an answer, nor does he give any reason for assuming that it was ever necessary for the problem to exist in its present form.

### Equality—at Any Price

THERE is, indeed, something terrible in Lord Beveridge's words. They seem to reflect a state of mind in which the desire for equality, for a "classless" society, has got the better of other, and probably more important, considerations.

Why should it be taken for granted that the traditional families, which have helped to make and keep our country great, should be taxed into extinction even when their living representatives are hard-working, thrifty and public-spirited? Is this either necessary or desirable? We are sure, for our part, that it is neither.

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And how could Lord Beveridge bring himself to refer with such naïve condescension to a minister of the Christian religion? The Church may have its faults, but it is much more than a collection of "key workers." It is the outward and visible sign that ours is still professedly a Christian nation. It is the established body which reminds us that we were not self-made and that we can never be self-sufficient.

We would respectfully ask Lord Beveridge, and all who may have heard his broadcast without a spasm of repugnance, to realise that a church is not just another kind of community centre, and that social security will be a national disaster if it reduces us all to a dead level and destroys the freedom and independence of individuals, which has meant so much to us in the past.

### The "Lit. Supp."

ON January 18 there appeared the fiftieth anniversary number of *The Times Literary Supplement*, and the paper celebrated the occasion with an enlarged issue, consisting of an historical survey and a selection from the criticisms of fifty years. It proved to be a worthy and readable memorial of a journal, which has maintained a respectable level of literary criticism for half a century.

The "Lit. Supp." has its weaknesses, and some of them have been persistent. The reviewing of fiction is appreciably poorer in quality than any other department. Not only are the novels of ten badly selected; the reviewers have an unhappy knack of being timid and indecisive. This is the only noticeable blemish. Otherwise the "Lit. Supp.", with its almost unbroken tradition of anonymity, can boast of an enviable record of impartiality and fair comment. Unsigned reviews are sometimes a mixed blessing, but it is not easy to recollect any instances of marked bias.

The "Lit. Supp." has been well served by its editors. Sir Bruce Richmond (who founded the tradition), Mr. D. L. Murray, Mr. Stanley Morison, and the present occupant of the editorial chair, Mr. Alan Pryce Jones, have all made their special contributions to the paper's development. We wish it and its staff a future as useful and happy as its past, and may the "Lit. Supp.", like every other serious journal, soon have all the paper that it needs!

*N.B.—Some of our readers will be interested to know that the Index to Volume CXXXVII (June to December 1951) of "The National and English Review" is now ready and obtainable from the Publisher, price 6d. (post free).*

# THE CASE FOR ITALIAN WORKERS IN BRITISH MINES

By THE RIGHT HON. ALFRED ROBENS, M.P.

**B** RITAIN needs coal badly: lots of it. Twenty million tons available for export now, would make all the difference in the world to the country's economic position. In the first part of this year something like 10 million tons will have to be brought from the U.S.A. to Europe at fantastic cost. Abundant supplies from British mines would not only improve our own economic position, but would help very considerably to put many European countries on their feet.

What is the total requirement? How can we produce it? Inland consumption has risen prodigiously since 1946, when the figure was 186 million tons, to 208 million tons last year. But in order to consume this amount ourselves, exports had to be drastically cut, from a peak post-war figure of 19 million tons, to 12 million in 1951. Although the house coal market received  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million tons more in 1951, the average householder got less, because the number of registrations had increased by 10 per cent. We also produced 11 million tons by open-cast methods, and whilst there are still many millions more to be got from that source, it is not inexhaustible, and ultimately open-cast coal will have to be replaced by deep-mined. If coal were freely available to the householder, the most conservative estimate would be an extra five million tons for this purpose alone. Add a few more million tons for increased internal consumption, as more and more demands are made upon the gas and electricity industries; allow a mere 25 million tons for

exports and bunkers; and it is clear that the country needs at least 245 million tons per annum. Last year the total production, including 11 million open-cast, was 222 million tons. The last five years have shown an annual average increase of 3 per cent., and this despite the enormous amount of mechanisation that has taken place. How can we then produce the amount needed? The answer is manpower. Can we get the extra manpower from entirely British sources? The plain answer is, no.

Recruitment to the mines in Britain is essentially from mining families, and these families to-day are very much smaller than they used to be. Much has been done to induce other workers from non-mining areas to enter the industry, but the results have been poor. With full employment and the real demands for manpower, due to the re-armament drive, having not yet fully shown themselves, it is clear that it will be a physical impossibility to reach the minimum manpower requirement of 710,000, unless the pits are opened to the thousands of Italians who are eager to come and work in British mines. The leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers have agreed in principle that they should be admitted; the National Coal Board wants them; but in the main the men in their local lodges refuse to have them. Why? And are their reasons good or bad?

One reason advanced is that the introduction of 10,000 Italians might spoil the strong bargaining power of



AT THE EMIGRATION CENTRE AT NAPLES.

*Reading from left to right.*—Sig. Dominado (Italian Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs). Sig. Francisco (a permanent official of Italian Foreign Office). Rt. Hon. Alfred Robens, M.P. (then Minister of Labour and National Service). Mr. W. Braine (British Labour Attaché, Rome). Sig. Rubinacci, (Italian Minister of Labour). Background of Italian workers.

the men. But surely the increase in manpower would improve the position of the mineworker. After all, the prosperity of the miner depends upon the prosperity of the mining industry itself, and at the present rate of just over 300 tons output per man per year, the increase would mean another three million tons for sale, thus improving the Coal Board's finances. It would also mean for the British miner increased earnings, because the new entrants would be taking over the datal jobs, thus enabling a good deal more upgrading to the face. Thousands of young miners are to-day held back from going to the face, because there is not the labour to do the work that they are now doing. It is important too that we should be supplying our foreign customers now, building up a trading relationship and goodwill that will be invaluable in a few years' time, when coal from the Ruhr and

Poland will be more plentiful and competition for foreign orders will be keen. So, both in the short term and in the long term, it is in the interest of the individual miner to get the coal in these immediate years, and secure the financial position of the industry, so that it can continue to improve the wages, amenities and conditions of the men. There can be no question of foreign labour undercutting the present rates. One of the conditions agreed by the Union and the Coal Board is that all these new entrants shall become members of the N.U.M. and have the same wages and conditions as agreed for the British miner.

Sometimes it is said: "Suppose we have another period of unemployment?" It is true that miners have bitter memories of the past when they experienced short-time working, and a good deal of unemployment. But, as I have shown, the coal requirement

## THE CASE FOR ITALIAN WORKERS IN BRITISH MINES



AT THE EMIGRATION CENTRE AT NAPLES.

Section of crowd of Italian workers at the Centre being addressed by Rt. Hon. Alfred Robens, M.P.

is now so great that the men can look forward to many years of full employment with perfect security. Even if there were redundancy, the National Agreement provides that the foreign worker must go first, so that in any case the introduction of foreign workers now would not affect the employment possibilities of the British miner.

Then there is perhaps the fear that the foreign workers would not fit into the mining village life. The answer to that is the actual experience of places where foreign labour has been accepted. By and large, wherever Italians have gone into the industry, they have soon made themselves at home and been liked and respected in the village. Of course there are bound to be exceptions, but the general view amongst the mining community, so far as I was ever able to ascertain, was that they fitted in excellently.

But perhaps if we really got to the bottom of the local objections they would boil themselves down to a

vague distaste for "foreigners" and, in the case of Italians, to a feeling that only a few short years ago we were fighting them as enemies. Well, of course, those aren't reasons but prejudices, and not a matter of argument but of conviction. But it is precisely here that the miners, perhaps more than any other body of industrial workers, should face up to the international character of their union organisation. In the international field the miners have led the way in the formation of their international miners' organisation. Perhaps it is because miners the world over share the same dangers, wrestle with Mother Nature deep down in the earth, where loyalty, courage and devotion to duty mean men's lives, day in and day out, throughout the years. Whenever a disaster occurs, whether in this country or upon the Continent, from the funds of the miners comes generous help, transcending nationality and recognising only the common dangers



all miners share. The President of the National Union of Mineworkers has travelled thousands of miles through many countries attending the annual gatherings of miners the world over. They have always believed and preached internationalism. And they are right. Let the industrial workers of many lands come together in order that they may know and understand one another, and another strong link in the chain of peace will be forged.

Resistance to the introduction of foreign workers on these grounds is therefore really cutting right across the work of miners' leaders over generations. During last Summer I spent some weeks in Italy, particularly in Naples and Milan, where the emigration centres are situated. I talked to hundreds of Italian workers, fine specimens of manhood, ready and anxious to work. To them life was hard, very hard. Over two million unemployed, and no prospects. A population rising at the rate of 400,000 a year. The outlook for them was grim. None of those I met really wanted to leave their homes and the sunny skies of their native land. But they had wives and children and they wanted to do what every decent husband and father wants, to keep them out of poverty. The Italians are great family people. They love their homes and their families, and it is only their desperate economic position that makes them flock in their thousands to apply for work abroad. In the sacred name of humanity we should play our part in helping to alleviate the distress that this pressure of population has brought upon Italy. And at best it will be only alleviation;

the cure has to be sought elsewhere.

But the facts are plain for all to see. Britain needs more coal; she needs manpower in order to get it. Italy has men ready and willing to come. Their introduction into British pits, with all the necessary safeguards that have been agreed, cannot possibly have a deleterious effect upon the British miner. Indeed, had there been the slightest chance of that, the leaders of the miners in this country would never have agreed with the Coal Board to their introduction. The manpower position is very serious indeed. Something like 25 per cent. of miners are over fifty years of age; 20,000 are over sixty-five years of age; and who can say now how many of these will retire under the pension scheme which has come into operation this year? The industry requires urgently an influx of men up to thirty-five years of age, to provide a more balanced age-grouping and so make the future more secure. If recruitment falls away again this year, as it did in 1949 and 1950, when there was a loss of 17,000 and 20,000 respectively, and if for some reason or other extended hours and Saturday working do not produce the same output as last year, Britain's position will indeed be desperate. The shortage of just a few million tons of coal can lead to a shutting down of industry and widespread unemployment.

These are the plain and brutal facts. I believe that the acceptance of Italian workers will be to the advantage of the miner, the industry in which he serves, and the country whose present and future prosperity depends so much upon him.

ALFRED ROBENS.



# MASTERS IN OUR OWN HOUSE?

## THE ECONOMICS OF SURVIVAL

By BERNARD BRAINE, M.P.

NEVER has there been greater need for close and harmonious co-operation between ourselves and the United States. For this is the crucial year. Most authorities seem to agree that it is now or never for our enemies if they are bent upon open war, and that if the present uneasy truce can be maintained for a further year we should then find ourselves sufficiently well armed to deter aggression and compel respect for the rule of law.

But if Anglo-American co-operation is to be effective during this period, and if it is to continue beyond it, then it should be based upon partnership between equals. Unhappily, we have too long been dependent upon American financial aid, and it seems likely that we shall continue to be dependent upon it for some time ahead. Such a relationship would be unhealthy at the best of times and, if it were extended beyond the period of emergency, it could be dangerous.

Nothing would improve Anglo-American relations more than a demonstration that we could dispense with assistance and stand upon our own feet. The decision to start repaying the American loan and the stern measures taken to arrest approaching bankruptcy at home, are moves in the right direction. If, however, we are to regain our solvency we require some-

thing more—a vast upsurge of economic activity within Britain and the sterling area, and freedom from the shackles which our late rulers allowed our American friends to fasten upon us.

For well over half a century we have lived in a fool's paradise, assuming that our industrial skill and efficiency would always earn us a living in a world of seemingly limitless opportunity. As a result we have built up the most artificial and precarious economy in the world. We neglected our home agriculture because it was cheaper to buy food from other lands. We paid too little attention to our imperial heritage, while other nations vigorously sought industrial self-sufficiency. Not until 1932—by which time depression had taught not only us, but our partners in the Commonwealth, a grim lesson—did we try and adjust ourselves to the fact that the free trade world of the nineteenth century no longer existed. Once we took the plunge, adopted a policy of protection for home industry and, with the Dominions, established a Commonwealth-wide system of preferences, the way to recovery was open. A stable area of trade was created. The means of persuading foreign countries to reduce their tariffs in return for reciprocal concessions on our part was now in our possession. As a conse-

quence the 'thirties saw a phenomenal expansion in trade, not only between the countries of the Commonwealth, but between them and the rest of the world. Indeed, an impetus was given to an expansion in trade everywhere.

Even now, despite the frantic efforts of recent years to export to the United States, a bigger market for British goods is provided by Australia (with only one-eighteenth of the population of the great Republic) or by the Union of South Africa, or by Canada or the Indian Sub-Continent.

Indeed, our efforts to enter the United States market have been partly at the expense of our established customers in the sterling area who, finding it increasingly difficult to obtain their requirements from us, have been looking to the United States for supply. This has aggravated the dollar shortage. And, what in the long run could be far more serious—because of our inability to pay with goods for sterling area raw materials and foodstuffs—it has precipitated a sterling crisis.

The way out of these difficulties—indeed the key to our very survival—lies in developing the resources and expanding the trade of the sterling area Commonwealth. The possibilities are tremendous. The opportunity is there.

But here's the rub. We are neither free to develop these resources nor to stimulate inter-Commonwealth trade to the full advantage of our family of nations. *For we are not masters in our own house.*

The trouble began with the American Loan, the acceptance of which by Socialist-ruled Britain seems to have been a blunder of the first magnitude. To beg for aid from the Americans on the strength of our war-time sacrifices, as we did in 1945, without first consulting our partners in the Commonwealth and preparing with them a businesslike plan for the de-

velopment of our mutual interests in which, perhaps, the United States might have been invited to participate, was hardly an act of statesmanship. But to surrender in return for such aid our sovereign right to determine the pattern of trade and development within the circle of our Commonwealth family was surely an act of madness.

The American point of view at that time was understandable, even if it showed no understanding of Britain's position in the world and the precarious nature of her economy. Certainly it is desirable that trade should flow across the world with as few hindrances as possible. It seemed little enough then to ask that countries receiving dollar aid should reduce their tariffs and eliminate their preferences. To Americans it had long seemed that the abolition of other people's trade barriers would remove one of the main causes of friction between nations and make a substantial contribution to world peace. Let there be an end to bilateral arrangements between nations—so ran the argument—they could only lead to regional groupings and the setting up of rival economic *blocs*. Instead, the rule of non-discrimination must be applied; that is to say, if one nation should make a tariff concession to another, it should be extended to all nations, even though they made no concessions in return.

That such a policy would materially benefit the American economy—already safe and secure behind the highest tariff wall in the world—by permitting American production to flood overseas markets, must have been a consideration of some weight. President Roosevelt had made it clear, while the war was still being waged, that he intended to find jobs for sixty million Americans by trebling the exports of the United States. The conditions imposed upon us by the

## MASTERS IN OUR OWN HOUSE?

terms of the American Loan were some of the means whereby this ambitious programme was to be fulfilled.

That these conditions—if ever they were to become permanent—would weaken the British Commonwealth, perhaps begin a process of disintegration and force some of its member nations into direct association with the United States, did not appear to enter the minds of those who came to power in Britain in 1945. It was too much to expect of those starry-eyed idealists to entertain such thoughts. For them—as we have since learned to our cost—the advent of Socialism was enough. “We are not worried about the future: the day is coming when we can spread and expand,” declared Mr. Herbert Morrison. It was not to be expected that such men would think and act imperially.

So it was that in exchange for a Loan intended to last five years, but which, in the irresponsible hands of Dr. Dalton, melted away in a third of that time, a British Government mortgaged the future by blindly accepting American proposals for the elimination of imperial preferences, the scaling down of tariffs and the control of world trade by an International Trade Organisation, and agreeing not to discriminate in any way against the United States by reducing its imports from that source and increasing them from Commonwealth countries. All this was later embodied in a trade charter signed at Havana in 1948. Although this document was never actually ratified, its general principles were incorporated in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to which our Socialist rulers also subscribed.

Other members of the Commonwealth followed our lead. They had little choice. As a result all of us have been prevented from giving one another increased advan-

tages in customs duties which are not extended to foreign countries. Thus, if Australia wants to give a tariff concession to Britain, she must give it to Germany too. No new preferences can be given and no existing preferences can be raised.

Despite all this—perhaps because of it—the world's economic problems are still no nearer solution. There remains a wide gap between the theory of non-discrimination and its practice. Indeed, the United States itself has been practising a form of discrimination far more calculated to exacerbate international relations than the mild discrimination of Imperial Preference. She has taken a lead, for example, in severing trade relations with certain Soviet satellite states and has been strongly critical of Britain for carrying on even a limited trade with such countries. In a world verging upon war there may be powerful justification for such a policy—and it is the right of a sovereign state, feeling its security threatened, so to act—but such action certainly stands in stark contrast to the doctrine of non-discrimination imposed upon Britain by the Americans in 1945.

Thus under Article 9 of the Loan Agreement Britain could not reduce her adverse balance with the United States by switching her purchases from dollar to sterling sources of supply. We were free only to reduce our dollar imports, to tighten our belts and to become increasingly powerless to solve our own problems in our own way. It is true that, now we have started to repay the Loan, Article 9 no longer applies. But the principle it prescribed is embodied in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The only difference is that we can withdraw from the General Agreement by giving sixty days' notice.

These limitations upon our economic

sovereignty have already seriously prejudiced the foundations of British trade. If they continue, the advantages we have hitherto enjoyed in Commonwealth markets, which offer vastly more scope to our exports than any others, will disappear. The way will be left open not only for American mass-production, but for low-cost Japanese production, to oust British goods, to destroy the sterling area and to hasten the end of the Commonwealth.

There are supposed to be compensations in the scaling down of American tariffs. Now, it must be admitted at once that, if the American market were thrown wide open to British manufactured goods, then great advantages might ensue.

If the Americans could be made to understand the simple truth that they must buy as well as sell and that the policy of paying foreign countries to buy American goods keeps the World in a constant state of unbalance, then we might see the beginning of wisdom in these matters. But one might just as well ask for a free ticket to the moon. American manufacturers are not likely to allow Congress to permit foreign goods to compete with them on a massive scale within their own domestic market. All experience shows that, when American interests cannot stand up to competition, free trade principles are quickly discarded. This extends not only to imports but to exports as well. American citrus and raisin exports are deliberately subsidised now because they cannot stand up to competition from Commonwealth producers.

Discrimination on these lines does indeed breed antagonisms inimical to world peace, for it engenders suspicion

of American motives and fear of American domination.

So much is at stake that it is imperative we speak frankly to our American friends, from whom, let it be gratefully acknowledged, we have received so much generous and warm-hearted assistance. They are well aware of the importance of the British Commonwealth to them. Let us tell them how much more important it is to us. Let us show them that if it is to survive it must be free to determine the pattern of its trade and development so as to balance its accounts, and that this entails the restoration of its sovereign right to use tariffs to ensure protection of employment and wages, and preferences to stimulate its production and trade.

We should not seek to be exclusive—it would be wrong to do so. Imperial Preference was never an end in itself, but a means—and an exceedingly flexible one—of securing a balanced economy. The countries of Western Europe—some of which are colonial powers with preferential systems of their own—might well enjoy certain of the advantages of Imperial Preference. Nor should we close our minds to a system of two-tier preferences, under which certain countries would be accorded full preference, while others would receive a lesser advantage.

These are matters which should be discussed at the earliest opportunity by the Commonwealth in conference. But we in Britain might well give a lead by serving notice that we shall withdraw from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. That can be done now.

BERNARD BRAINE.

# MR. CHURCHILL IN WASHINGTON

By DENYS SMITH

IF the visible results of the Truman-Churchill conferences were all that counted there might be some grounds for classifying them as of no great moment. But the visible results were of minor importance compared with the improvement—to use a much over-worked word—of “atmosphere.” Mr. Churchill had decided to see President Truman some time before putting together a list of subjects about which he wished to see him. It was the fact of the meeting, far more than the results, which counted, though the latter were by no means negligible. The extent to which Anglo-American relations had deteriorated during the past year or so was less discussed perhaps in London than in Washington; but it was something of which officials on both sides were deeply conscious. Somehow the cable had snapped and the two countries were drifting apart. Mr. Churchill was not only best qualified to restore this lost contact, but the only man who could do it. His meetings with President Truman—to quote from an editorial in the *Washington Post*—“restored warmth and frankness which had been sadly lacking in the later years of the Labour Government. The damage done by the chilliness of Mr. Attlee and the bumbling of Mr. Morrison at the Foreign Office seems to have been repaired. The leaders of the two Governments are talking again and working together again as friends.”

Mr. Churchill's efforts to restore “lost contact” was a play in two acts. The first act was getting back into touch with the United States Government. There was then an entr'acte

used by Mr. Churchill for a rest in New York and a trip to Ottawa to give the Canadian Government a first-hand account of what had been done, particularly on some aspects of the talks, such as raw materials exchanges, atomic matters and N.A.T.O. reorganisation. Then came the second act in which Mr. Churchill tackled the even more important task of getting back into touch with the legislative branch of the American Government in his address to the joint session of Congress.

The official communiqué issued at the end of the discussions with the Executive branch was not particularly informative; such documents rarely are. In form it might be compared with an austerity sausage. The genuine meat of Churchillian prose was dotted amid the less appetising official clichés which gave it bulk. In content it might be compared to an iceberg. The important point was not the slight chill it engendered around it, but the fact that the visible portion only represented a small fraction of the total bulk of work accomplished. It was also difficult to express in cold print the new warmth which had entered into Anglo-American relations. Mr. Churchill did not bring about this change merely by beaming affably into the camera lenses and making the “V” sign whenever called upon to do so. He brought it about by approaching problems on which there had been differences in a new way. He put first things first, and what came first was the need for preserving Anglo-American unity.

The discussions on the Far East



provide a good illustration. Britain will continue to recognise Communist China and the United States will continue to recognise the Nationalist regime. But only the bare bones of difference remain. "We recognise that the over-riding need to counter the Communist threat in that area transcends such divergences as there are in our policies towards China," the joint official statement said. This might be compared with the joint statement issued after the Truman-Attlee discussions of December 1950. "We have discussed our difference of view on this point and are determined to prevent it from interfering with our united effort in support of our common objectives." A more positive approach was adopted in place of an agreement to differ and a hope that this difference would not hamper agreement in other fields. The policy of the former Government appeared less one of resisting Communist aggression than of trying to compromise with it. There was a great deal of talk about the importance of being friendly with General Mao so that he would be encouraged to become a Chinese Tito. Recognition appeared to be in the foreground of British policy towards China. Now the Americans have been assured, as one American official put it, that recognition is only "a tenuous paper relationship." On the big question of checking further Chinese moves in South-East Asia the two countries are united. It might be called a change of emphasis rather than a change of policy; but it is a change, in any case, for the better.

There had been a mild "flap" among minor American officials at the thought of Mr. Churchill's arrival, just as there had been before his war-time conferences with Mr. Roosevelt. They seemed afraid that Mr. Churchill would sweep down like a one-man

Golden Horde, devastating all their pet plans and projects. Higher officials were not worried. They were rather amused as they noted the press pundits busily engaged in refusing Mr. Churchill things for which they knew perfectly well he had no intention of asking. When matters passed from stoutly declaring Mr. Churchill would not be handed all the Los Alamos atomic secrets on a Fort Knox gold platter to saying that he would not be welcome, Mr. Truman, one of the British Prime Minister's staunchest admirers, decided things were getting out of hand. He told a press conference no visitor could be more welcome, and wondered where such foolish tales started. They undoubtedly started from the erroneous belief that Mr. Churchill was intent on using his forceful eloquence and great prestige to secure decisions unfavourable to the United States on a long series of projects starting with additional American financial aid. Yet Mr. Churchill's first words on his arrival at New York were: "I have come over here not to make all kinds of agreements and interchange all kinds of diplomatic documents," but to "build up again something of that intimacy at the different levels, and at the service levels as well as in political spheres, which did enable us to go through so many dangers and perils in the past." Mr. Truman let it be known that he entered into the talks in the same spirit. President and Prime Minister were not primarily searching for solutions of a series of particular problems, but laying the foundation on which future joint decisions could be made more easily.

On January 17 Mr. Churchill faced a Congress which was very different from the war-time Congresses he had twice addressed. Those had been receptive and eager to be convinced: the bond



## MR. CHURCHILL IN WASHINGTON

between speaker and listener was there from the start. This Congress was wary, distrustful, divided and—above all else—election-minded. A false note would have been fatal.

But Mr. Churchill's speech was unerringly aimed at the mood and minds of the men in front of him. It was not designed for the millions who sat by their radios and television screens; still less for the British public whose hopes, fears and suspicions were not the same. It was inevitable, therefore, that the speech should meet with some criticism at home: but for Congress it was just right. It gave members the confident feeling that here was a man who understood them and whom they could understand. No other British statesman could have created that feeling. In fact no American could have won over such an audience to such an extent. Even Senator Taft's stony features brightened after the first few minutes into a warm grin of appreciation. When Mr. Churchill left the Chamber, the happy look on his face reflected the knowledge of a task well done and a big test successfully passed.

Congress, or a great part of it, had been suspicious that Britain wished to have American financial aid so that she could continue to live beyond her means. It was disappointed with British policy towards Communist China. It believed Britain did not like the idea of a European Army, and was placing obstacles in the way of European federal union. It thought Britain regarded Japan as a trade rival to be kept weak, not as an indispensable axle round which future Pacific security must revolve. It accepted the popular American caricature of British colonial policy as a lifelike portrait, explaining why there was trouble in the Middle East. Even exposure to Mr. Churchill for thirty-five minutes cannot do everything; but at least these various sus-

picious and misconceptions will never be so strong again.

In the first minutes of his speech Mr. Churchill rejected the idea that he wanted money to make British life more comfortable; then he coasted along on the laughter and applause aroused by this denial to recall the burdens Britain had borne for others during and since the War, while Congress was still in the mood to listen without thinking that this was special pleading. It was an oratorical trick which Mr. Churchill used more than once. His sally "After a lot of experience I have learned that it isn't a good thing to dabble in the internal politics of another country" was greeted with a gale of laughter. Then he proceeded to ride the gale and dabble in American politics so skilfully that no-one realised he was dabbling. He urged the bi-partisan approach to foreign policy in the guise of a description of conditions in Britain; but the application was driven home by a tribute to the late Senator Vandenberg, Republican pioneer of bi-partisanship. Vandenberg's final message, said Mr. Churchill, gave the feeling "that all great Americans should work together for all the things that matter most," as though to say "let all who are small Americans stand up and challenge this."

Mr. Churchill praised Congress for resolutely opposing Chinese Communist aggression, and was glad America had not allowed the anti-Communist Chinese on Formosa to be invaded and massacred from the mainland. He thus reduced Far Eastern differences to the question of recognition, which he had already demoted in a joint statement from an honoured place in British foreign policy to the diplomatic attic, among unwanted *bric-à-brac* inherited from the late Government. There has been no subject which has so marred Anglo-American friendship as diver-

gence over the Far East, and no greater contribution could have been made to Anglo-American harmony than a reduction of this divergence to minuscule proportions. Congressional fears that British Colonial ambitions would prevent a settlement in the Middle East were met by the bold challenge:—Let the United States promise a token force for the Suez Canal and the task of winning acceptance of the proposal made by Britain, America, France and Turkey for its international defence would be easier. Members of Congress with one voice rejected the idea of an American token force in Suez: but in the act they stamped indelibly upon their minds that British troops were not there "for national vainglory." The realisation that security in the Middle East is a charge on all interested nations, and not on Britain alone, has become clearer. The fear that Britain not only would not join, but objected to, a fused European Army, was met by identifying the British attitude completely with that of the United States and Canada. Britain, like America, would encourage and support European fusion, "or melding—a word I have learned over here." So Mr. Churchill, by quickly raising laughter, gave members no time to mull over the idea that this did not go quite so far as they had hoped.

Mr. Churchill made one other major contribution to the narrowing gap between Britain and the United States while he was in Washington: but it cannot, unfortunately, be described. He spoke to, and answered questions "off the record" for, some eight hundred members of the Press and Radio. Mr. Churchill has always been popular with the Washington Press. They have had their surfeit of public figures who are synthetic products of the ghost writers and publicity men: but with Churchill there is no hiding behind the Maginot Line of a well-manicured advance text,

no parade of the little wooden clichés, no "I'm reminded of a story" humour, no cloudy phrase that marks the empty mind. The British Prime Minister is all authentic Churchill, and they bless him for it. As one of them put it: "Churchill is more than a man; he is an experience." Because they have experienced Churchill, there are many in the American capital to-day who will write more kindly about Britain.

No leader of the West has done more to mould events than Mr. Churchill: yet, running like a silver thread through all his transatlantic speeches, was the theme that man, despite his best endeavours, has but a puny influence over the course of history. The only certainty in this life is the unexpected. "What is the scene that unfolds before us? It is certainly not what we had hoped to find after all our enemies had surrendered unconditionally," he told his audience in Ottawa. "It is hardly possible to recognise the scene or believe it can truly have come to pass," he told Congress. "We have no control over the past and very little over the future," he told members of The Society of Cincinnati, when they claimed him as heir, by right of birth, to America's revolutionary tradition. But though all else might change, one thing must endure: America and the British Commonwealth must stick together. "Let us maké sure that the supreme fact of the twentieth century is that they tread the same path": those were Mr. Churchill's final words to Congress. They hung about the air as he made his slow and dogged way from the Chamber through the cheering throng of members. Though many thought sadly, as they watched him go, that they might never hear him again, the words would be wrongly termed "last words." They are words which will last.

DENYS SMITH.

# THE CHINESE THREAT TO BURMA

By E. C. V. FOUCAR

"FRANKLY, I think that Burma has had it. The Chinese invasion of the country began just as soon as the British moved out in 1948. The British kept some check on illegal entries, but the Chinese don't give a hoot for their Burmese cousins who are quite incapable of shutting out trespassers. . . . Mind you, it takes a bit of doing to keep a starving Chinese peasant off a vacant and cultivable piece of land."

The speaker had a wide experience of Burma, and some knowledge of the Chinese. He was in a group around the bar of the Strand Hotel in Rangoon, where they were discussing that most controversial of topics, the Chinese-Communist threat to Burma.

Another man interjected: "Wait until they have finished with Korea. It will then be Burma's turn."

But the first speaker merely shook his head and smiled. "Burma has had it. The Reds don't need to stage any military invasion. . . ."

\* \* \*

Far away to the north-east, beyond the thinly populated uplands of the Shan States, lies the frontier between China and Burma. This line—several hundred miles of it—crosses mountainous jungle country; the few roads traversing it can be counted upon the fingers of one hand, and the very occasional paths and mule tracks are

known only to the bandits, smugglers and others who do not advertise their movements. Admittedly, it is a difficult frontier to control; and the Chinese smuggler, a master of finesse, makes rings round the Burmese Customs officers and police who are kept busy trying to put down his activities. These officials have no time for the small groups of hungry Chinese who slip unnoticed through the jungle into Burma. Such inconspicuous migrants often merge themselves into the landscape as peaceful cultivators whose industry is beyond criticism.

This happens every day; it has gone on since times immemorial. In fact, the Burmese themselves were once Mongol invaders who swarmed across the mountain barriers of the north and pressed on to the sea by way of the rich and fertile valleys of the Irrawaddy and Sittang rivers. The British, when they held Burma, put a partial stop to this invasion of Chinese; but it began again when they withdrew from the country. Men who know the frontier say that since the end of the war with Japan the normal Chinese population of Burma has more than doubled. No longer is there a thin trickle of unauthorised entrants; the influx is now a flowing stream. Mandalay and Bhamo are fast becoming Chinese cities. It is only a question of time before the flood extends to the vast rice-fields of Lower Burma.

\* \* \*

Rice. It is the staple diet of almost all the nations of Asia, and feeds more than half the population of the globe. Japan fought, and lost, the war for rice and for control of the fertile plains of South-East Asia. Rice is probably the real reason for the Chinese Communists intervention in Korea and, less openly, in Indo-China. Like the Japanese, the Chinese Reds are acutely conscious of their dependence on adequate food supplies, and of the importance to them of the thinly populated, surplus rice-producing countries along their southern borders.

In Siam the danger is appreciated, and Marshal Pibul, by his recent *coup*, has striven to guard against it. But what of Burma where the Government of Thakin Nu is pre-occupied with an unending rebellion which refuses to be quelled? Of all the surplus rice-producing countries Burma is the greatest, and she must stand high upon the Chinese list for occupation.

In pre-war days Burma sent her grain to India, Ceylon, Malaya, Java, China and Japan. Even to-day, whilst rebels and bandits ravage the countryside, she exports annually well over a million tons of rice—one-third of the pre-war figure. But the crop cannot attain its former dimensions until the rebellion is suppressed—an achievement seemingly beyond the capacity of the Burmese Government. Their troops can do no more than hold the main centres and keep a precarious watch on the lines of communication.

Meanwhile, the rebels cause wholesale destruction. But this is only a temporary injury to Burma, whose wealth, literally, lies in her soil. She is a land where famine is unknown, and where her population of about sixteen millions could easily be doubled, and doubled again, without discomfort.

\* \* \*

Of course the Burmese are aware of the truth; they are apprehensive of Red China, and watch events in Korea very closely. Smiling uneasily, they dare not admit their fears. Thakin Nu has been at pains to explain that the attitude of the Peking Government towards Burma has always been "very correct"; Burmese Ministers and high officials flock to the lavish entertainments given by the Chinese Ambassador in Rangoon; an atmosphere of extreme cordiality is maintained. Behind this lies the knowledge that the army of Burma cannot stand up to an invasion, and that a couple of Chinese divisions could brush aside all opposition. It would require no real military effort on the part of the Chinese to conquer Burma, especially as they would receive assistance from the Burmese Communist rebels.

If Peking seeks excuses for intervening in Burma she has plenty. For instance, there is that long-standing boundary dispute which springs from the olden times when the Chinese condescended to Burma as a feudatory state from whom they received tribute. The quarrel over the frontier line was never settled with the British, and has now been revived. The Chinese maintain that a great part of Upper Burma is rightly theirs, and recent reports suggest that their troops have occupied some portion of the disputed border territory.

Then there is the complaint that Burma is harbouring the Kuomintang Nationalist force which retreated into Kengtung to escape from the attacking Communists. These Chinese Kuomintang troops are certainly in Kengtung, and they are there in spite of all efforts of the weak Burmese Army to round them up. Kengtung is in closer contact with Siam than it is with Burma, and it may well be that the Siamese, for their own ends, are

## THE CHINESE THREAT TO BURMA

maintaining this force in Burmese territory.

Lastly, we have the affair of the Russian rifles which must be very worrying for Premier Nu and his Ministers. They have frequently scouted the suggestion that Thakin Than Tun, the leader of the Communist rebels, is in close touch with Peking. Yet quite recently some of Than Tun's men were found to be armed with Russian rifles which could only have come to them from China. This is proof positive that the persistent reports about Than Tun's contacts with Peking are correct. A ready-made Chinese explanation for invasion would be that Than Tun had asked for aid in his struggle against the capitalists represented by Premier Nu's Government. Incidentally, it was Thakin Nu who, in 1948, made a Fourteen Point Declaration of policy just as Red as anything issuing from Peking.

\* \* \*

How does all this strike India, Burma's close neighbour?

In the remote border jungles of Assam, her easternmost province, military and police outposts watch constantly for the entry of unwanted Communist agitators; elsewhere, travellers in Assam by road, rail or air are carefully screened. In distant New Delhi they have not forgotten those maps recently issued by the Chinese laying claim to all lands east of the Bhramaputra River. India would view with dismay a Chinese incursion into Burma.

Holding Burma, the Chinese would command the two great military highways built by the British and the Americans for the defeat of the Japanese. These, the Manipur Road and the Stilwell Road, are in sad disrepair but remain adequate for mobile troops not closely tied to mechanical transport. These roads, and not the mountainous Himalayan jungles, are ready-made points of entry for invaders from the east.

India is probably sufficiently strong to meet such an invasion, but it is doubtful if she could do anything to help the Burmese. The time factor would be against her. Moreover, India seems to have a liking for the doubtful benefits of neutrality.

\* \* \*

Perhaps that man in the Strand Hotel was right, and Burma has already had it. The peaceful invasion of her fertile and still empty acres has begun. But there are many who find it hard to believe that the Chinese are without evil intentions, or that they are content to acquire new territory imperceptibly and by process of time. Those in power in Peking must justify themselves to the hungry millions who demand rice, and it is to the wide semi-tropical expanses watered by the southern-flowing rivers that they must turn. If they are not willing to leave their conquests to time, then they must reckon with the United Nations, with whom rests the salvation of Burma and all South-East Asia.

E. C. V. FOUCAR.



# THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AND THE FRENCH UNION

## A CONSTITUTIONAL COMPARISON

By JOHN BIGGS-DAVISON

**T**HOSE who strive for European Union always have to remember that Great Britain is not only the greatest European Power but the leading Commonwealth nation. Mr. Churchill wrote nearly 22 years ago in an American periodical that:

We are with Europe but not of it. We are linked but not comprised. We are interested and associated, but not absorbed. . . . The conception of a United States of Europe is right. . . . It is, however, imperative that, as Europe advances towards internal unity, there shall be a proportionate growth of solidarity throughout the British Empire.

Great Britain must march in step with a very diverse company of Commonwealth partners. Several Dominion statesmen have expressed their eagerness that the United Kingdom should lead Western Europe; the eyes of others are turned not towards Europe, although it is there that the great decision will be made, but to the world of Islam, to South-East Asia or across an undefended international line.

France, our Ally, is the second imperial Power, but her overseas commitments have much less influence with

her in determining her policy towards unification in Western Europe. One of the reasons for this is the French colonial tradition of assimilation. Assimilation is a reality in St. Pierre and Miquelon, whose colonists have always been French citizens; it is less practicable in Algeria with its Islamic associations and it is impracticable to-day in Indo-China. Nevertheless, although a uniform policy for such widely differing territories cannot be achieved, the French Union, unlike the British Commonwealth, is bound together at the centre by constitutional forms and representative bodies. Article 62 of the Constitution of the Fourth Republic provides that members of the French Union shall pool their resources for the common defence. India, Pakistan and Ceylon did not attend the Commonwealth Conference on Middle East defence.

Reaffirming, on the morrow of victory over the invader, the principles of 1789, the Preamble to the new French Constitution declared that

France forms with the overseas peoples a Union founded on the equality of rights and duties without distinction of race or religion.



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and that France would lead those peoples to democratic self-government, while guaranteeing to all

equal access to public office in the individual or collective exercise of rights and liberties.

As Colonial Powers, France and England have the same object, but whereas the Commonwealth is an entirely voluntary league of independent states, the autonomous members of the French Union are still in form, and in fact, interdependent.

According to Article 60 of the Constitution, the French Union consists on the one hand of the French Republic and, on the other, of the Associated States and Associated Territories, although the Associated Territories are U.N. Trust Territories. The French Republic comprises not only Metropolitan France and the three Algerian Departments, but also the Overseas Departments, namely, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion and the Departments of French Guiana, as well as the Overseas Territories which are the other former colonies of France: French West Africa, French Equatorial Africa, New Caledonia and its dependencies (an Anglo-French condominium), the French Establishments in Oceania, Madagascar and its dependencies, French Somaliland, the French Establishments in India (which have outlived the British Raj), and finally St. Pierre and Miquelon.

The Associated States are the Empire of Viet-Nam and the two Kingdoms of Cambodia and Laos. The Associated Territories are the two Trust Territories, the French Cameroons and French Togoland. Morocco and Tunisia are Protectorates after their own kind and their relations with France are managed, not by the Ministry of France Overseas, or by the Ministry of Relations with the

Associated States, but by the Quai d'Orsay.

Being constitutionally part of the Republic, the Overseas Departments and Territories are represented in both Chambers of the French Parliament.\* Parliamentary representation is also provided in the Council of the Republic for French citizens resident in Tunisia, Morocco and the various French dependencies overseas.

The President of the French Republic is President of the French Union, whose permanent interests he represents.

(Article 64 of the Constitution.)

There are also two representative bodies, the High Council and the Assembly of the French Union.

The President must summon the Assembly at the request of half its members. They are 240 in number; half are from Metropolitan France, 50 being elected by the Metropolitan Deputies and 25 by the Metropolitan Councillors of the Republic. The Metropolitan Parliamentarians also have the right of electing the same number of representatives as are sent to Versailles by the Associated States, which are allowed a maximum representation of 45. They need not themselves be members of Parliament but the representation of the two Chambers reflects the strength of the political parties. The Algerian and Overseas

\* One of the African Senators is believed to have been eaten by his constituents. M. Biakaboda disappeared on a motor drive in the jungle and, when some human remains were discovered some weeks later and examined by experts, they were reported as likely to be his. His two wives demanded a public enquiry. The problem facing the Council of the Republic is that, as there is no certain proof of M. Biakaboda's death, his vacancy cannot be filled and, according to the Constitution, the seat may remain vacant for 30 years.

## THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

Departments and the Overseas and Associated Territories together provide 75 members. Representatives of Overseas Departments and Territories are elected by the local Assemblies. All members are elected for six years.

The Assembly of the French Union must be consulted when it is proposed to make a French law or decree applicable in an Overseas or Associated Territory. The Assembly can also debate questions concerning the Union, submit resolutions to the National Assembly, or make proposals to the Cabinet or to the High Council. It is thus a consultative and not a legislative body and lacks the means to make its will effective. In June, 1948, two resolutions were passed protesting against the state of ignorance in which the Assembly was being kept, and there has been some discontent with its purely advisory rôle.

The other representative body, the High Council, was inaugurated in December of last year. It met at the Elysée Palace, the official residence of the President of the Republic and of the French Union, who takes the Chair. The High Council consists of the Premier and other representatives of the French Government and four delegates from each of the Associated States. The terms under which it functions are not clearly defined. The Constitution merely authorises it "to assist" the Government of France in its "general conduct of Union affairs." Nguyen Dac Khé, who is assistant director of the Emperor Bao Dai's cabinet in Paris, appears to regard its functions as analogous to those of British Commonwealth Conferences.

Viet-Nam looks upon the Council as a Conference of Ministers representing independent but associated states. As such, there will be no voting to determine matters by a majority, but discussions for the purpose of arriving at unanimous decisions. Where there is no unanimity

a compromise plan will have to be found.

For Nguyen Dac Khé France is not the Metropolis, but "an Associated State, just like Cambodia and Laos," and each State "must have its own diplomacy." If the French claimed that the Constitution did not so provide, then so much the worse for the Constitution!

The fact that we are intimately associated with France in the French Union does not imply that we have no rights beyond a mere Council discussion of defence and foreign questions. On the contrary, the Council must be prepared and equipped to take decisions on matters affecting Union economy and finance. For instance, as a producer of rice, we are interested in any commercial accord by which France buys rice elsewhere. As a Union partner, does our product get preference, or doesn't it?

Whatever modifications may be made to meet this point of view, the French Union is a system with central institutions and a central direction, at least of defence and external policy. The British Commonwealth and Empire, like the British realm, has no written Constitution, and the dependencies of the Crown are the responsibility of, but are not represented in, the Parliament at Westminster, and British policy is to prepare them for complete independence. As General Smuts said, when he addressed the Empire Parliamentary Association in London on November 25, 1943:

In the Commonwealth this group of ours has become wholly decentralised as sovereign states. The members of the group represent the unbreakable spiritual bonds which are stronger than steel, but in all matters of government and their internal and external concerns, they are sovereign states. In the Colonial Empire, on the other hand, we follow the opposite principle of centralisation. . . . The question that arises in my own mind looking at this situation

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objectively, is whether such a situation can endure. . . . Should we not give very grave thought to this dualism in our system?

Unlike the French Union, the British Empire and Commonwealth has no common institutions except of an *ad hoc* character. The King functions not as the presiding personage of a confederacy, but as the monarch of a number of independent kingdoms. He has no place in the Constitution of India, which, however, recognises His Majesty as Head of the Commonwealth of which the Indian Republic is a member. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has gradually lost its place, so far as the Dominions and India are concerned, as their highest court of appeal.

To use the jargon of Strasbourg, the form of Commonwealth co-operation is functional, not organic. Imperial Federation is a dead cause. Commonwealth policy is co-ordinated, when it is co-ordinated, by direct communication between Governments and between the Commonwealth Relations Office in London and the various Departments of External Affairs. Ministers and officials meet for periodical conferences. The Commonwealth Liaison Department of the Foreign Office provides a digest of the telegrams for transmission to the Commonwealth Governments overseas, either by the Commonwealth Relations Office direct, or through the High Commissioners for the United Kingdom. Mr. R. G. Casey recently complained that Australian correspondence was mainly with London and "not enough with other Commonwealth members." Service Liaison Staffs are attached to the Commonwealth High Commissions in the different capitals and the Imperial Defence College is a Commonwealth institution.

During and since the last War,

regional organisations have sprung up, embracing self-governing as well as dependent Imperial countries. As Colonial Secretary, Mr. Oliver Stanley was a believer in Regional Commissions which "would provide effective and permanent machinery for consultation and co-operation, so that the States concerned might work together to promote the well-being of the Colonial territories." The East African High Commission and Central Legislative Assembly has existed since 1947, although it is, for obvious reasons, less well-known than are the activities of the Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in South-East Asia. Conferences of Ministers and officials are held alternately in Wellington and Canberra as a result of the Australia-New Zealand Agreement of 1944 and the South Pacific Commission is representative of the U.S.A., France and the Netherlands as well as of the United Kingdom and the Southern Dominions.

In London there is a plethora of useful organs of practical co-operation. Besides agricultural, forestry, statistical and scientific bureaux and institutes, there are a Commonwealth Air Transport Council with its technical section, Commonwealth and Empire Radio for Civil Aviation, a Commonwealth Communications Council, Commonwealth Economic and European Recovery Programme Liaison Committees and a Commonwealth Shipping Committee. The work of the Imperial War Graves Commission is well-known throughout the world.

Is this enough? There is no portmanteau answer. A United Western Europe must draw its economic strength from its association with the French Union, Indonesia and the Commonwealth and Empire, and "as Europe advances towards internal unity" there must "be a proportionate growth of solidarity throughout the British Empire."

The sovereign independent nationhood of the Commonwealth members is not disputed. May we, therefore, hope that British and Commonwealth thought may increasingly be directed towards interdependence? Of the Asian members, Pakistan's doubts of the value of the Commonwealth have, for the most part, been doubts of its effectiveness as a united world organisation. An Australian statesman said at the fourth Unofficial Commonwealth Relations Conference at Bigwin Inn, Ontario, in September, 1949, that "insistence on nationalism in an atomic age is rather irrelevant." The British preference for practical day-to-day relations, in contrast to the Gallic craving for constitutional forms and instruments, exemplified in the various controversies which arose at Strasbourg, should not be allowed to hide the necessity for the closest Commonwealth unity to meet common difficulties and dangers. It may be that the French Union and the British Commonwealth can learn from each other.

The present Constitution of the French Union goes back to the War, in which France Overseas played so important a part. The Brazzaville Conference of 1944, presided over by M. Pleven (then of the French Committee of National Liberation), proposed the creation of representative institutions for the Colonies and the strengthening of their representation in the French Parliament. The British colonial example, with its objective of self-determination, was rejected. The principle of "free consent" for membership of the French Union did not survive the abortive Constitution of April, 1946. France remains in the minds of Frenchmen a civilising nation destined to assimilate her children. General de

Gaulle is not alone in advocating a federal constitution and a *Grand Conseil de l'Union* able to legislate, budget and provide for the defence and domestic and foreign policy of the whole.

But the attitude of M. Nguyen Dac Khé and of the Viet-Nam Premier, M. Tran Van Huu, expressed at the time of the inauguration of the High Council, suggests that Asian nationalism may affect the structure of the French Union as radically as it has changed the relations of Great Britain with the former Indian Empire and with Ceylon. Flexibility is not only, and not always, a British virtue. Had we not tied ourselves for several years too long to the Statute of Westminster as the last word in Imperial evolution, the Union of Burma and the Republic of Ireland might still be members of the Commonwealth. One hopes that France will profit by our example. She has already agreed to propose Viet-Nam, Cambodia and Laos for membership of the United Nations. The war in Indo-China began as a colonial campaign; it is now a struggle of national liberation, which will increasingly be fought by a Viet-Nam national army. On the other side, the desire expressed by Viet-Nam politicians for "Commonwealth status" has not led to any attack by the Associated States upon the existence of central representative organs or of a President of the French Union, who is now to be assisted in that capacity by a special staff of permanent officials and who is by no means a cypher.

The combination of effective partnership with the independence of members must be the aim of the Commonwealth and the French Union alike in these perilous days.

JOHN BIGGS-DAVISON.

## FIFTY YEARS AGO

**I**N recent years there has been much controversy about the phrase "Unconditional Surrender," and it is therefore all the more interesting to read an Episode on the subject in the February, 1902, number of *The National Review*. The question had arisen, of course, in connection with the war in South Africa.

... Throughout the Recess Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman [the Liberal leader and, later, Prime Minister] had stumped the country declaring that "our [i.e. the Conservative] policy is a policy of extermination by crushing a brave race into the dust," but he could not produce any passage in any speech of a responsible Minister justifying that charge. Nor had any member of the Government even declared that "we demanded unconditional surrender," though Mr. [Joseph] Chamberlain proceeded to demonstrate that this is the only possible policy. There seemed to be a good deal of ignorance as to the meaning of this expression: "It is perfectly absurd and ridiculous to confuse a policy of unconditional surrender with a policy of extermination." We are no longer in the Middle Ages when unconditional surrender meant the sacking of a town, the confiscation of property, outrages upon women, and indiscriminate killing. The Government had been challenged to adopt the policy of Lord Durham in Canada by persons who were entirely ignorant of the precedent of which they talk so glibly. "*The policy of Lord Durham was a policy of unconditional surrender.* When the rebellion was put down nothing but unconditional surrender was accepted." ... The Canadians had serious grievances, which the Cape rebels had not, as the latter enjoyed

every liberty, right and privilege which the Canadians demanded or have since acquired. There was, therefore, an excuse for the Canadians, but there was no sort of justification for the conduct of the Cape rebels. After the rebellion was suppressed, Lord Durham refused amnesty to the leaders and banished some of them to the Bermudas, but the Government of the day rejected this proposal of banishment, and Lord Durham consequently resigned in disgust. On his departure the insurrection broke out afresh, and the sober-minded Lord Glenelg declared "it was excited by the recollection of past impunity and the hope of future amnesty. . . ."

This argument might well have been used in support of the Allied policy agreed upon and propounded at Casablanca in 1942. Mr. Churchill had good reason to know what the above quotation conveys. In 1902 he was a young M.P., with recent experience of the war in South Africa, and still sitting on the same side of the House as Mr. Chamberlain.

Our leading article in February, 1902, was on "Continental Anglo-phobia," and the author was Max Nordau, the eminent German philosopher and pioneer of Zionism. Here are some extracts from his provocative, but friendly, appreciation:

The hostile prejudice against England developed by former conflicts, which forms a kind of historical sediment, is converted in many cases by personal contact with Englishmen into acute enmity. I hope my English readers will forgive me if I touch on this point with complete frankness. The Englishman at home is charming; abroad he very often shows a very



rough exterior. To his friends he is the truest and best of friends; to his equals he shows the most refined and delicate politeness. . . . As to foreigners, he does not bother himself about them. . . . His code of good manners is for use among Englishmen only; it has no reference to foreigners. The English travel a great deal, far more than any other nation. The foreigners, therefore, who have seen the Englishman on his travels are far more numerous than those who have seen him in his own home; very many more have had occasion to be annoyed with English inconsiderateness than to appreciate English hospitality, English warmth of heart, and the attractiveness of English customs. . . .

The Englishman feels himself to be superior to the rest of mankind, and therein he is not to blame, for every nation has the same good opinion of itself, and it is not every nation that has such good grounds for its convictions. The Englishman is proud of his race . . . proud of his history, proud of his world-empire, proud of his wealth; he never forgets that he is the owner of India, the cousin of Shakespeare, of Milton, of Drake and Nelson, of Marlborough and Wellington, of Fulton and Stephenson; and that he is the greatest civilising agent in the world. . . . But if he is right in not forgetting these facts, he is wrong in making foreigners feel them. In his relations with foreigners his pride easily develops into arrogance, which naturally arouses resentment. . . .

The Englishman's contempt for the foreigner makes him the most unadaptable of human beings. Those who are acquainted with English life declare that the Englishman at home has in the last few years lost much of his insularity, and that may be the case; but abroad he is as insular as ever. Wherever he makes a comparatively long stay he establishes his own little island. Every English colony on the Continent is surrounded by the white cliffs of old England. His adhesion to his English

code of morals and customs is perhaps more orthodox than it is at home. He refuses to learn the language of the foreign country in which he lives. Is it because he has no talent for languages? Certainly not. When he chooses to do so he learns foreign languages with as great facility and correctness as the subjects of any other country (I could give quite a list of English friends who speak from two to six languages without accent and write them without a mistake), but he will not do it. He demands of the natives that they shall speak English with him and conform to his own habits and convenience. . . .

After fifty years we are bound to ask: Were we ever quite as good, or quite as bad, as Mr. Nordau made us out to be? And—more important still—are the faults and the virtues still there? Are we still proud of our national and imperial achievements, or have we lost our pride as well as our complacency? Anglophobia has not, in the last half-century, been confined to the Continent of Europe: it has manifested itself in every continent (except perhaps Australasia), and recently it has become a force to be reckoned with even in England! Not a few Englishmen are prepared to believe that at the turn of the century those who governed the British Empire were swaggering, rapacious, unself-critical and vainglorious. To this legend Mr. Nordau's article is surely a sufficient answer. Here was *The National Review*, one of the chief organs of "Tory Imperialism," publishing in 1902 a sweeping criticism, by a foreigner, of the conduct and attitude of Englishmen abroad. Left-wing editors have not always been so willing to publish criticism of their own "ideology," or, for that matter, of foreign countries whose form of government they have chosen, rightly or wrongly, to admire.

# BOOKS NEW AND OLD

## NAUTICAL OCCASIONS\*

By ERIC GILLET

ONE day in the 1770's, soon after some thieves were executed at Gloucester, a party of adventurous little boys played at "hanging" by the Market Schoolhouse near Stroud. One of them, Alexander John Ball, was chosen as the victim. He gave a very lifelike performance, and after he had been suspended for some time in mid-air, his younger brother remarked "Our Alick likes it; he won't speak." He would never have spoken again had it not been for the intervention of a passer-by who, seeing that Ball was already black in the face, intervened and cut him down. Years later, when Captain Ball was in command at Malta, he told his secretary, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, that he had been induced to join the Navy because of the impression made upon him by Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Ball was a bookish man, the most literary of Nelson's captains. He was never a great naval commander, neither was he a man of learning. He was too much a man of meditation for the one, too much a man of action for the other.

When Ball took over the *Nemesis* her crew were dissatisfied and mutinous. When he had to punish a man Ball would ask him three questions: "Did you commit the act? Did you know it was a breach of the rule? Was it not in your power to have avoided it?"

Ball was one of the most able, but certainly not one of the most brilliant, of the band of captains who served under Nelson. The great admiral

owed his successes as much to them as to the wise and far-sighted Lord St. Vincent, to whose comprehensive planning Nelson's spectacular victories were so largely due. The Navy has always been a world of its own. It's importance has always been recognised by the British race, which has nevertheless exercised upon it the most ruthless economies in time of peace.

Mr. Ludovic Kennedy has been happily inspired to write *Nelson's Band of Brothers*. It passes in review the naval careers of Nelson and fourteen or so of his captains. There is a most sympathetic and able estimate of the splendid work done by that great admiral, Sir John Jervis, afterwards Earl St. Vincent.

In the early years of the nineteenth century the Navy was composed of extraordinarily varied elements. For example, the ship's crew of the *Implacable* in 1808 consisted of 285 English, 130 Irish, 25 Welsh, 6 Manxmen, 29 Scots, 3 Shetlanders, 2 Orkney, 2 Guernsey, 1 Canadian, 1 Jamaican, 1 Trinidad, 2 St. Domingo, 1 St. Kitts, 1 Martinique, 1 Santa Cruz, 1 Bermuda, 8 Swedes, 7 Danes, 8 Prussians, 1 Dutch, 3 Germans, 1 Corsican, 5 Portuguese, 1 Sicily, 1 Minorca, 1 Ragusa, 1 Brazilian, 2 Spanish, 21 Madeira, 28 Americans, 2 West Indies, 2 Bengalis. This astonishing miscellany was the rule rather

\* *Nelson's Band of Brothers*. By Ludovic Kennedy. Odhams. 16s.

*A White Boat from England*. By George Millar. Heinemann. 16s.



HORATIO, VISCOUNT NELSON.

than the exception. Some of the men had volunteered. Others were criminals who had enlisted to escape the gallows. The majority were roped in by press-gangs and the quota system. It was estimated that of every ship's company one-third were landsmen and one-eighth foreigners. "In a man-of-war," Commodore Edward Thompson wrote, "you have the collected filth of jails: there's not a vice committed on shore that is not practised here."

Pay had remained at the same rate for a hundred years. An ordinary seaman received twenty-five shillings a month; a landsman, twenty-two shillings. The meat was of a consistency so hard that the crew carved fancy articles out of it. The butter turned rancid shortly after the ship was commissioned, and was then given to the boatswain for greasing the shrouds and rigging. Naturally sickness was unavoidable on such a diet, and as there was added to it practically no medical services and a system of

punishment so severe and inhuman that sometimes five hundred lashes were given with the cat-o'-nine-tails for offences such as desertion and sedition, it seems extraordinary that the Navy was not in a state of open and continuous mutiny. It is incredible that officers and men living under these appalling conditions should have won the great series of victories that represent the crown of our naval achievement.

Somehow they succeeded in adapting themselves to their Spartan existence. They never lost their sense of humour. They responded quickly and generously to good leadership. There is a charming story told of Nelson, who was ordered by Jervis to shift his flag to the *Theseus*. Jervis described this ship and her crew as an "abomination." A fortnight later Nelson found a scrap of paper on her quarter-deck. On it was printed in thick, clumsy lettering:

Success attend Admiral Nelson! God bless Captain Miller! We thank them for the Officers they have placed over us. We are happy and comfortable, and will shed every drop of blood in our veins to support them, and the name of the *Theseus* shall be immortalised as high as the Captain's. SHIP'S COMPANY.

Again and again in *Nelson's Band of Brothers* Mr. Kennedy stresses Nelson's amazing talent for obtaining the very best from the officers and men who served under him. Completely fearless himself, he expected and usually got the very best out of those he commanded. In his private life he could be vain, idle and suspicious; but there is a great mass of evidence available to show that as a leader of men he has had no superior in our history.

Mr. Kennedy proves himself to be a naval historian of distinction and ability

in this book. His use of contemporary documents and family papers is skilful and apt. *Nelson's Band of Brothers* is a proud and stirring narrative. It would be interesting to read Napoleon's comments on it. It was he who said, "If it had not been for you English I should have been Emperor of the East. But wherever there is water to float a ship we are sure to find you in the way."

If Mr. George Millar had not been otherwise occupied during the last war it is reasonable to suppose that he would have been found doing his bit in some small, uncomfortable craft, because the sea is in his blood and his idea of a holiday is a hazardous voyage in a 16-ton sloop with his wife as crew. I found his new book, *A White Boat from England*, as exciting and refreshing as anything I have read for a long time. He confesses that he is a novice. His method is simple. "After taking all reasonable precautions to see that hull, gear, sails and crew are sound, I fling myself (and my wife) on the waters. Then we pick up the remains". The process is wonderfully stimulating. "The sea has really been very decent to us, and I like its smell, its unreliability, and its capacity for making the delights of the land seem desirable beyond the dreams of Alcibiades."

Of course there is very much more to it than that. Mr. Millar is a very good writer, with a passion for freedom and a boundless zest for enjoyment and new varieties of experience. He likes to pit his wits against the sea and then, by way of sharp contrast, to find a good anchorage, where he can enjoy, in his little ship, warmth, light, food, books, alcohol, tobacco, comfortable beds, violins and encounters with surprising and original characters. In his new book, which is a kind of sequel to *Isabel and the Sea*, he describes the trip he took with his



GEORGE MILLAR.

(Photo: John Vickers.)

wife in *Serica*, a graceful, slender, tall-masted craft, from England down the coasts of France, Spain and Portugal into the Mediterranean.

It was an eventful trip. Isabel Millar had her arm in plaster most of the time (it would be revealing to have *her* account of the voyage), and there was a time when the author, almost delirious from some unspecified fever, tried to get *Serica* back on course after gales had blown her far from her intended destination. Mr. Millar has a racy, vivid style that carries the reader on like a strong, friendly wind. The account of the approach to Benodet is a fair example of it:

I must have fallen asleep over the tiller, for I awoke to find the yacht plunging into a filthy sea where two tides met or separated. The Pointe de Penmarc'h, lit by shafts of sunlight on the port beam, showed a petrified forest of lighthouses, high rocks, beacon towers. We got the wind stronger, and began to race on with more splash, flinging out silver-gold cascades on either hand. We met an ugly Swedish

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motor yacht speeding in the other direction, and rolling hellishly. Penmarche was evidently her point of departure, for off it she sheered to port and belched out across the bay. We were sorry for her occupants. To travel in her must have been like encasement in a drill vibrating in the waving hand of a drunk dentist who is attempting to gash himself while he works. (The yacht later earned fantastic charter money on the Côte d'Azur.)

Mr. Millar has a Borrovian eye for unusual types. He collects them with the affectionate care of a connoisseur. There was the pleasant young Breton fisherman who had served with the Free French in this country. He proved to be a tremendous Anglophile. "Leeds, c'est charmant," he stated, "Macclesfield, c'est jolie. . . . A Brighton on est bien. . . . Chouette, Sheffield. . . ." Slightly sinister was the crippled gentleman of Palma who spent his time finding out all that he could about his neighbour's affairs. In his private museum, alongside an English crossbow, said to have been fired at Agincourt, lay one of his legs, in a complicated airtight glass case. It had been embalmed and shaved, and its colour resembled unsmoked meerschaum. Its companion, for a perfectly sound reason, was in the local railway museum.

*Serica's* refit in Gibraltar provided a pleasant interlude. Ham sandwiches and tea, a roving Admiral, about to sail single-handed to the West Indies, bathing in a warm sea, red mullet (the Mediterranean variety infinitely superior to their larger brothers of the Atlantic), the hospitality of various clubs, all made their contributions. The voyage ended on the

French Riviera, where smugglers thronged Cannes harbour, and *Serica* stripped for winter quarters, came out of her retirement to rescue a piece of human driftwood tied to a lifebuoy far out at sea. With his companion he had been bound for Villefranche from the Italian coast, with a big cargo.

*A White Boat from England* will be read and enjoyed when many more pretentious books that have been hailed as "masterpieces" are forgotten. The author makes no fuss about his modest odyssey. He notes with pride that *Serica* crossed the Bay of Biscay in forty-seven hours and covered 308 miles under canvas at an average speed of 6.55 knots, although she had been becalmed for four hours. Millar had his difficulties, but he makes light of them. After all there was always compensation round the corner. What could be better than the young Portuguese officer, who scrambled aboard *Serica* carrying the works of Shakespeare? "Why do they praise this writer so?" he asked. "I want you to explain me this, for according to my observation, he is never true to life. His characters, while they make many long speeches, do not stand out as human beings each with his own strengths, weaknesses and mannerisms. Now I open the book at random, and I ask you candidly . . . here is a nobleman who speaks, and what does he say?"

"If music be the food of love, play on . . ."

George III would have offered this young man speedy promotion.

ERIC GILLET.



# WHAT PRICE REVOLUTION NOW?

By THE HON. JOHN GRIGG

PROFESSOR DENIS BROGAN is one of the few men living who can be compared with Macaulay. The range of his knowledge—his capacity for taking in both the detail and the diapason of human affairs—places him among the greatest scholars that England (or rather Scotland) has ever produced. But as a writer he is not in the same class as Macaulay, because he is careless about the way his work appears in print, and because he cannot control his afterthoughts. His latest book,\* for instance, suffers from an accumulation of misprints, from footnotes on nearly every page, and from a quite unnecessary Appendix. But this is only a criticism of the author's manner; his matter is almost beyond reproach.

He tells the story of "the age which we may conveniently date from 4 July, 1776"; an age in which Revolution, that "violent medicine for the ills of the state," has "acquired . . . the status of an institution." And throughout this narrative, implicit in the cool, witty, factual analysis, is "the question of the price of Revolution, the certainty that there will be a high price, the uncertainty that the price will pay for the goods ordered." The American Revolution

did a lot more than free Americans from the British yoke. It exiled a great many worthy Americans; it confiscated the property of the losers and transferred it (on easy terms) to the more adroit of the winners.

The French Revolution, and the Empire which sprang from it,

\* *The Price of Revolution*. By D. W. Brogan. Hamish Hamilton. 15s.

were paid for with two million lives . . . and with unknown and incalculable economic losses that may have kept France at least a generation behind in economic progress, a handicap that she has never overcome.

The price of the Russian Revolution is still being paid—and not by Russia alone.

But while he exposes the human wickedness and error which have helped to make modern revolutions so baleful, Professor Brogan does not ascribe all the troubles of our time to political movements which might have been avoided. "The world would have been tormented, disordered, threatened, had neither Marx nor Lenin ever lived." Science and industry, trade and transport—these are the greatest of modern revolutionaries.

The basic revolution followed . . . the traders, into Canton, into the Hooghly, into Yeddo Harbour, into the peaceful and empty Pacific of the Spanish Crown. . . . And everywhere the traders went, they brought with them, willy-nilly, not merely or mainly the ideas of revolution . . . but the weapons, tools, techniques that began . . . to upset the old, apparently eternal order of Asia and Africa, and the stable though new order of Latin America.

The Communists have not, therefore, created the revolutionary situation in the world to-day: they have found such a situation already in being and are exploiting it for their own ends.

It is fashionable nowadays to decry national feeling and to seek the salvation of mankind in supra-national authority. Professor Brogan refuses to be carried away on this popular wild goose chase.

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He recognises the limitations of patriotism: but he also recognises its abiding value and its potency in the hearts of men.

... if it is folly to wish away the nation state, to attempt to build a continental or world union that regards the nation as a mere obstacle instead of what it is, the only viable political form ... so far discovered that can call on the necessary devotion and faith, it is also folly to cling desperately to the doctrine that nothing really matters outside the nation. ...

Wisdom, therefore, consists in avoiding both the extreme of federalism and the extreme of chauvinism. There is no need to be either a state-worshipper or a super-state-worshipper.

Another bogey to which the Professor is not afraid to do justice is "imperialism." He admits that "to say of a policy that it is imperialist, is to damn it without further appeal": but he shows that this prejudice is largely unfair. The exercise of empire over "backward" peoples may not be an ideal arrangement: but it has much to commend it in practice, and it cannot anyway be regarded as a perversion of nature.

... in politics, behind every ... absurd appearance, there is a less absurd reality. The totally absurd can only exist verbally and the British Empire in India, the Dutch Empire in Indonesia were important realities. That they existed proved that there was something abnormal; but the abnormality was in India, in Java, not in England or the Netherlands.

The political ideas of many Asiatic leaders are thus made to seem as silly as in fact they are. And so is the superficial and hypocritical anti-imperialism still common among our American friends.

To an American, Messrs. Quezon, Soekarno, Nehru, Chiang Kai-Shek are all modern imitators of George Washington. ...

But the contemporary problem in Asia is not as simple as that. The circumstances and personalities of the American Revolution are not reproducible among other races and in another age.

It would take too long to mention all the merits of Professor Brogan's book: but its shortcomings are so few that they can be referred to here without inconvenience. There are, in fact, only two serious criticisms that can be made.

The first is that too little attention is given to the Continent of Africa, which is disposed of in about half a dozen pages. This can hardly be considered fair treatment for so large and important a subject: but there would be less cause for complaint if the treatment were, so far as it went, convincing and satisfactory. Unfortunately it is not. The Belgians (in the Congo) are said to be free, if they wish, to "make an alliance with their southern white neighbours in Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa. But," says Professor Brogan,

to do that would be to tie their fortunes to a ship that, if not doomed to sink, is certain to go through the most terrible storms ...

It is hard to believe that the Professor can seriously think the policies of "Rhodesia" and the Union of South Africa are identical. But how otherwise is it possible to explain the words which have been quoted above?

As a nation, we are prone to complacency about the soundness of our institutions. We are most reluctant to admit that British society could ever completely succumb to revolutionary influences. Professor Brogan is in this respect typical, and readers who have experience of what is happening to-day in the industrial areas of Britain may feel that he is rather too light-hearted in his optimism. He remarks in a

## WHAT PRICE REVOLUTION NOW?

footnote that he does "not know in England of Communists, open or secret, holding important posts, who would prefer their duty to their party to their duty to their country." And he alludes to the General Election of 1945 as a moment of "careless good cheer." Of course these are only slight indications, but they suggest that he underestimates the effect which class-war propaganda may have had and be having upon large numbers of British people. By avoiding violence we are not necessarily avoiding revolution.

But these two weaknesses (if such they be) do not mar the total effect of Professor Brogan's book. It is not too much to say that, if this book could be read and understood by even one in ten of those who now have votes, in this country and elsewhere, the outlook for civilisation would be brighter. But democracy does not as a rule require that citizens should be educated, or even that they should be literate. Consequently we are living in a world which has not only not been made safe for democracy, but which is in some ways being made even less safe by democracy.

Millions of men and women who are vitally concerned in the matters which Professor Brogan discusses will never read his book or become aware of his arguments: that is a depressing, though inevitable, fact. But anyone who is reasonably instructed and who hears of the book has a positive duty to read it. The cult of Revolution has brought such terrible calamities upon the world that it was high time some authoritative writer revealed the fallacies upon which that cult is based.

"What price Salvation now?" asked Bill Walker in *Major Barbara*. After reading Professor Brogan's book the natural question to ask is: "What price Revolution now?"

JOHN GRIGG.

## THE FLOWERS AND THE ROOTS OF ART

THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF ART. By Arnold Hauser. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*. 2 vols. £2 2s. 0d.

FRENCH, FLEMISH AND BRITISH ART. By Roger Fry. *Chatto and Windus*. 15s.

FAMOUS PICTURES. An Introduction to Art for Young People. By A. E. Chase. *MacDonald & Co*. 15s.

FROM the reader's point of view, literature can be divided into books that please and books that inform, with the bulk of poetry and fiction at one end of the scale and Whittaker's Almanack and Bradshaw's Railway Guide at the other. But a mass of critical and analytical writing lies between the two, shading almost imperceptibly from one to the other. Masterpieces undoubtedly occur in this intermediate category, about which the reader must make up his own mind as to the proportion of entertainment to instruction. The *Origin of Species*, for example, is immensely readable, but it must eventually take its place among works of instruction. On the other side of the watershed are books like *Sartor Resartus* or Virgil's *Georgics*. The test, I imagine, for the reader, is the kind of use to which the book can be put. Is it primarily a work of reference or is it a literary unit, to be read from cover to cover and digested for the sake of the general illumination its author sheds over certain areas of the mind?

In the case of Dr. Hauser's two-volume *Social History of Art* it is important for the reviewer to answer these questions before attempting to describe the book. Here is a subject that is vast in extent and is becoming increasingly important in the eyes of the average intelligent reader. Art historians have been over the ground again and again till there are hardly any major areas left to explore. Yet the light they have shed, intense though it may be, leaves the ground only partially illuminated. Art historians are like botanists who pick the flowers, classify and analyse

them, but forget, or choose to ignore, the fact that they grow on plants that have roots. Here is a fruitful field of research. The same area must be examined but on a lower, a more fundamental level. The work of art does not exist in a vacuum. It is the artist and not the work of art who must submit to analysis. And analysis reveals that the artist is the product of his age—the by-product of an environment or a cultural climate.

All this is not new. A consciousness of the *Zeitgeist* is one of the most significant symptoms of our time. Yet the task of relating the work of art to the cultural climate that produced it is so formidable, demands so vast a store of knowledge and understanding, that hitherto few writers have been willing to tackle it on a large scale. That Dr. Hauser should have done so is important, and the reader, as he settles down to this absorbing work, and is gradually caught up in its theme, will certainly find himself developing a profound respect for so learned an author and so ambitious a plan.

It is at this point that the doubt begins to creep in. Is this attempt to describe the soil of civilisation in relation to the crop that it produced to be regarded as an enormous essay or a work of reference? It is almost too massive for the former, yet it contains too little detail for the latter. Dr. Hauser's main interest is naturally in the descriptive arts of literature and painting, for it is comparatively easy to regard Homer or Dickens as witnesses in an enquiry into the *Zeitgeist*. Equally, Michelangelo or Delacroix provide the kind of evidence that is not difficult to interpret. But Bach and Wagner—surely equally important witnesses—are not so amenable. The book's index reveals Dr. Hauser's key personalities. The largest number of page-references belong to Balzac, Flaubert, Goethe, Michelangelo, Nietzsche, Rousseau and Voltaire. Debussy has a single entry: Sir Christopher Wren and Chaucer are notable absentees.

It is admittedly unfair to apply such a test to a book of critical analysis, but for the student, anxious to acquire a bird's eye

view of the culture of a given period, an index can be revealing. There will be many readers of Dr. Hauser's book who, instead of beginning with the stone age and working conscientiously through to what he quite reasonably describes as the "film age," will wish to turn straight to the Middle Ages or to find out how he accounts for baroque art or to trace the connection between Victor Hugo and Delacroix. Such a student will find Dr. Hauser immensely revealing and suggestive but inevitably incomplete. It is a book of brilliant generalisations based (see the voluminous notes) on immense knowledge and voracious reading. In any given chapter one longs for an expanded treatment of the theme, yet such a treatment would have turned the book into a twenty-volume encyclopedia. In the end one is captivated by the author's gift of compression and sense of proportion. If I find him more penetrating when he deals with literature than when he examines the visual arts, that is probably because I happen to be an art critic. A critic of literature would probably disagree with me. The truth is that here is a book that needed writing. To write it at all might have seemed almost impossible, and Dr. Hauser has achieved the almost impossible.

Roger Fry's well-known trio of lecture-courses on English, Flemish and French art have been reprinted in a single volume. They are as readable as ever. Fry possessed a penetrating humanism that made him by far the best historian-critic of his time. Fry, unlike Dr. Hauser, was more interested in the shape and the aroma of the flower than in the root that nourished it or the stem on which it grew. Some of his postulates begin to date, but no English writer since Ruskin has been so clear, so sensitive or so persuasive in his own field.

It was a good idea to make a collection of reproductions in colour of good pictures chosen (and admirably chosen) for the interest of their subject-matter—hunting, working, Winter, George Washington, cooks and kitchens, trains and stations, Holland at play, self-portraits and so on—and to present them to chil-



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dren with a simple commentary on the subject matter and on the painter's way of presenting it. To *Famous Paintings* Sir Gerald Kelly adds a blessing in the form of a short and rather bellicose foreword. It contains a warning to children about the danger of "losing heart and their way" if they listen to too many lectures and too much instruction about paintings. Possibly he is right; but what is the alternative? To look at pictures without "instruction"? In that case he presumably disapproves of Miss Chase's text which accompanies these reproductions.

His foreword begins gaily. "This is a fine book. It is full of pictures." Alas, both statements are, in my opinion, untrue. It would be more accurate to say "This is a well-intentioned book. It is full of reproductions of pictures in colour, many of which are travesties of the originals and most of which—even when the colour is moderately correct—give a distorted impression of the original." That statement is not an outburst of ill-natured pedantry. Sir Gerald is rightly concerned that children should not "lose their way." Yet a reproduction that gives so wildly false an account of the colour of Turner's "Fighting Téméraire," of the quality and texture of Chardin's "Boy with a Top," or the general tonality of Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne," that coarsens a Botticelli Madonna and vulgarises a famous Seurat can do more to make children (and adults) "lose their way" than any amount of lecturing and instruction. It is bad enough that reproductions inevitably falsify the physical size of the original. It is unforgivable that they should also falsify its colour and texture.

Sir Gerald, quoting Belloc, appeals to parents to "purchase a dozen or more and strew them about on the nursery floor." I wish I could support his plea. In all honesty I can only hope that intelligent parents will examine the plates carefully before they decide to purchase or to strew.

ERIC NEWTON.

## THE OCEAN

THE SEA AROUND US. By Rachel Carson.  
Staples. 12s. 6d.

WHEN we pass in review the civilisations that have come and gone preceding this Western culture of ours, we see that however much they may have differed they had one negative thing in common—ignorance of the phenomenal world. To the eye that could keep watch over the eons of geological time the life of mankind may seem only at its beginning; still, a million years or so is a fair period. Yet our civilisation alone has really got down to the study of nature. It was left to us to read the fossils. It was left to us to form an adequate idea of the heavens or even the circulation of our own blood. The date of *The Origin of Species* is fantastic—1859. Such love of nature was unknown before. The love of nature which is serious enough to promote concentrated study and to devise instruments to further it, is called science. To live in an age of science, the first age of science, is a wonderful privilege. It is to live in an age of poetry when the poets called scientists unveil vista after vista before our astonished gaze. Every year our view increases. It is only within the last few years that astronomers have revealed to us that could we mount upon a rocket fired to travel out of the solar system, humans would not live long enough for a trip to even the nearest star. It is only very recently indeed that speleology has been undertaken, its daring adventurers climbing down into the darkness of the earth to discover subterranean landscapes, the Styx itself, and the empty Hall of Hades.

It is less easy to explore the bottom of the sea. Half of the whole of this earth is covered by miles deep, lightless water that has not yet revealed its sunless secrets to the search of man. "This region," writes Miss Carson in her admirable book *The Sea Around Us*, "has withheld its secrets more obstinately than any other. Man, with all his ingenuity, has been able to venture only to its threshold. Wearing a diving helmet, he can walk on the ocean floor about 10 fathoms down. He can



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descend to an extreme limit of about 500 feet in a complete diving suit, so heavily armoured that movement is almost impossible, carrying with him a constant supply of oxygen. Only two men in all the history of the world have had the experience of descending, alive, beyond the range of visible light. These men are William Beebe and Otis Barton. In the bathysphere, they reached a depth of 3,028 feet in the open ocean off Bermuda, in the year 1934. Barton alone, in a steel sphere known as the bathyscope, descended to the great depth of 4,500 feet off California, in the summer of 1949."

It would not be possible to praise her book too highly. She performs exactly what she sets out to do—to place before the imaginative reader in clear language a comprehensive account of up-to-date oceanography. I say the imaginative reader, for here is the kind of stuff that feeds the imagination and promotes worship of the Divine Mystery. It is true that

the abyss of the ocean has not yet been explored; but how much else of fascination is known. In company with Miss Carson we can know something about that amazing substance that comes under the head of plankton, a substance consisting of tiny sea-creatures, a kind of soup feeding other sea-animals including some species of whale; in her company we can learn how the floor of the ocean is not really a floor at all, a plain, but is similar to the earth itself, with some level plains, but also with canyons and mountain ranges, a watered landscape with all its watered life, where all that is human is utterly excluded, and yet the place, the first place from which our first fathers crawled; with her we can attend at the birth of an island thrown up by fire beneath the freezing depths. It would be easy to continue suggesting the vistas she throws open. Suffice it to say that this is a book which really does stir the imagination.

JOHN STEWART COLLIS.

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**F**ORENSIC medicine is the science which treats of the application of medical knowledge to certain civil and criminal procedures. It is sometimes referred to as medical jurisprudence, legal medicine or even state medicine. Germany was the first country to recognise the need for this branch of medicine. Professorships were founded there in their universities early in the 18th century, and text-books on forensic medicine were already being published. It was not until the end of the 18th century that France followed suit: while the first book on the subject in this country was written by Dr. Samuel Farr in 1788.

Great Britain was slower in realising that all those matters which bring a medical man into contact with the law are as much a special branch as any of the other specialities into which medical science is

## A Great Pathologist

divided. Included, then, in forensic medicine are those questions affecting the civil rights of individuals and the examination of injuries to the person. It is not for the doctor to decide the issue in a civil action or to determine the guilt or innocence of an accused person. His duty begins and ends when he has used his medical knowledge to place in the hands of authority the facts he has observed and, when asked in court, the inferences he has drawn from those facts.

Forensic medicine is, therefore, perhaps a more suitable name for this speciality than Medical Jurisprudence, though this latter term has been sanctioned by long usage.

The tardiness in recognising the importance of this subject led to inadequate teaching and research in such matters as the careful examination of the body and its organs in cases of sudden death, and the use of the microscope and of chemical tests. Medical students received merely a perfunctory training in these subjects and scarcely that in how to give evidence in a court of law. The result of this neglect was to be seen, as the authors of this book remind us, in the case of *Rex v. Smethurst*. In this trial, which took place in 1859, a recognised toxicologist testified in the magistrate's court that he had found arsenic in the body of the victim, but subsequently admitted that the arsenic came from "an imperfection in the apparatus." This is an instance of how little forensic medicine had taken its rightful place in the 19th century.

In the early years of this century there were three medical men working at St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington; Doctors Pepper, Luff and Willcox. In the book under review they are called "the founders of modern forensic medicine." It was their work which determined young Spilsbury, whose aim had been general practice, to study pathology in special relation to its legal uses; and, before qualifying in 1904, he had already held the post of Joint Assistant Demonstrator of Pathology under Pepper.

The sub-title of this book on Spilsbury is "His Life and Cases." It is an admirable

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study of the man and his work, and the way in which the events in his life are brought into focus with the cases in which he appeared certainly justifies the sub-title.

Born into a family with a scientific strain—his father was a consulting chemist—it is no matter for surprise that the son took kindly to pathology: for chemistry and pathology have this in common, that they are both exact sciences in a way that clinical medicine can scarcely ever be.

Coming as he did, early in his medical life, under the influence of such men as Pepper, Luff and Willcox, and with his father's background, his future was determined for him. He had charm and good looks, imperturbability and will-power. These gifts were to stand him in good stead when he faced counsel. Even more important were his thoroughness and his habit of leaving nothing to chance.

These characteristics are well shown in this account of Spilsbury's Life and Work. All the notable trials in which he appeared

are described, many in great detail. A large part of the book is macabre, and the full details of some of Spilsbury's examinations may not appeal to the squeamish. But he was so immersed in his subject, so absorbed in the details of his examinations that we can readily believe that he scarcely noticed the gruesome nature of his work. And hard it was, on call at all hours of the day and night: as Home Office Pathologist he might be summoned to any part of England and Wales. That he overworked and thus undermined his health is clear. In addition he had to face tragic deaths in his family.

It is interesting to read, on pp. 186 and 187, a convincing account of his manner under cross-examination. His views were "conveyed with studied brevity and moderation, it was one of the secrets of his enormous influence with juries . . . he never gave an opinion unless he was certain; and not only was his experience unrivalled; but no man ever took so much trouble to ensure certainty." These are strong words: it might perhaps have been more accurate to say what a medical colleague once said, "that no pathologist before Spilsbury's day was so thorough."

This account of a man who was so much in the public eye is well-written and holds the reader's interest up to the last tragic page. His character is described on p. 189 as consisting of "diffidence allied to supreme confidence, curious limitations of outlook, manifest sincerity, scrupulous fairness, reticence and elusiveness. . . ."

It is clear that he realised his failing health and how this hampered his judgment. There is an instance of this on p. 408. He was looking for the exit wound of a bullet and was puzzled at not finding it. In fact it had never left the skull and fell out during his examination.

Spilsbury, at that time was not, in the words of a colleague "the Bernard Spilsbury we knew." He realised his great powers were leaving him and he "would not linger on to be a burden to others."

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## THE DUKE'S MISTRESS

MRS. JORDAN AND HER FAMILY : being the unpublished correspondence of Mrs. Jordan and the Duke of Clarence, later William IV. Edited by A. Aspinall. *Arthur Barker Ltd.* 30s. net.

**T**HERE is a vogue for light biography, but those who hope that this is another volume to add to a collection of such works will be disappointed. If King's mistresses should be romantic and exotic creatures, Mrs. Jordan is the exception to the rule; and the Duke of Clarence, though he gained a popular reputation in his youth as a glamorous sailor, shows himself to have been occupied by all the ordinary concerns of a good middle-class father. Their letters to each other, to their children, to their agent or banker, are not exciting reading, though they will interest the historian.

Professor Aspinall has done his work well. He has collected the letters, which cover a period from 1791 to 1814, from the manuscripts possessed by the Earl of Munster, a direct descendant of George Fitzclarence, and by the Huntingdon Library of California. To these he has added able introductions, which give their setting and explain, as the result of his research, such problems as the financial relations between the Duke and his mistress. But gilt does not make the dross itself sparkle. Neither the Duke nor his mistress wrote good letters, and in spite of their respective positions in State and theatre, and their relationship to each other, their letters are so homely and so unimaginative that no amount of careful editing could turn them into absorbing documents.

Mrs. Jordan is described by Hazlitt as a "child of nature whose voice was a cordial to the heart . . . to hear whose laugh was to drink nectar . . . whose singing was like the twang of Cupid's bow . . . she was all exuberance and grace." So she appears in some of the pictures of her that are included in this book: as painted by Hoppner and Romney she has charm and even beauty; and the vicious pen of Gillray must have been tempered by

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## The Duke's Mistress

secret admiration. In middle-age she remained a star of the theatre and could command more money than Mrs. Siddons : but such grace and vivacity are missing from her letters ; as revealed by her own pen in these notes of daily intercourse she is dull.

She was thirty years old and the mother of four illegitimate children when, late in 1790 or early in 1791, she became the mistress of the Duke of Clarence. She had postponed the event in the hope that Richard Ford, the father of her more recent children, was going to marry her. Disappointed in this she entered the relationship that was to last for twenty happy years and was to give her ten more illegitimate children.

They were happy years. She wanted a domestic life, and this she combined with her career on the stage. She was an excellent, if anxious, mother ; a most devoted companion to the Duke ; and an accomplished and successful actress. Her letters are full of the small matters of family and stage : the behaviour of her children by Richard Daly and Richard Ford worries her greatly, her lodgings in provincial towns frequently upset her, and above all her financial problems are endless. Scarcely a letter has no mention of money : yet often she was earning over £300 a week (lamb cost 8d. a pound) whilst she was given £800 a year by the Duke until their separation and thereafter never less than £2,000 a year.

Her letters from provincial theatres, which form the greater part of this collection, will interest students of the theatre, though the judgments of her fellow-actors are unkind without being witty, and her descriptions of the places through which she passes are pitifully inadequate. (Of Bruges she says " we saw what was to be seen "). The intrinsic interest of the letters greatly increases from the time that her separation from the Duke became inevitable. The Duke, pressed once more by financial needs and realizing that Princess Charlotte was the only legitimate child amongst all the children of the royal brothers, decided during 1811 that he must marry. He searched with vigour for an

## The Duke's Mistress

heirress who was willing to be his wife. His choice was Catherine Tylney-Long, the reputed owner of £40,000 a year.

Until this point the Duke's letters, most of which are to Mrs. Jordan, to his banker Thomas Coutts, and to his eldest son, George, are no more exciting than Mrs. Jordan's. He writes more of great contemporary affairs, but his approach is equally unimaginative and his information is such as can be found in most text-books. His letters to Miss Long's aunt, Lady de Crespigny, are, however, amusing. His first letter has such delightful passages as this: "I am clear that I have the good wishes of Lady Catherine and the two girls. I have my own. Miss Long must be quite sure I love her and adore her, and the only thing she has not, which is rank, I only can give her . . . I am . . . at this moment the first unmarried man in the kingdom. . . . The character of the third son of the King cannot be a secret, I know she likes what she has heard of me; the whole therefore must turn on whether Miss Long can like me or not." But, alas, Miss Long, though flattered by the attentions of the first unmarried man of the kingdom, gave her hand in unhappy marriage to the Earl of Mornington's son; and in December *The Times* announced that "A paper of yesterday says, 'A certain royal Duke is said to have made within the short space of two months matrimonial offers to no less than four young ladies of large fortune. He has already been refused by three of them. What success he may have with the fourth, remains to be ascertained.'"

The proposed marriage of the Duke involved the dismissal of Mrs. Jordan, and her letters of this period have a veiled poignancy that shows through the plainness of her sentences. It is in these letters that one can see the strength and repose of character that had made her so excellent a companion. She wishes the happiness of the Duke to continue; she is restrained and sensible; seldom can so prolonged and faithful an affair have ended so abruptly and yet so calmly. One is sorry for Mrs. Jordan, yet it is manifest that the Duke behaved kindly to her, and one feels that a chapter in both their lives

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## A GREAT MOUNTAINEER

has drawn naturally to a close. Mrs. Jordan died four years later at the age of fifty-five.

It is a mistake to publish letters that are as scrappy and trivial as these, however eminent their authors may be. They make up a book that is consistently neither interesting nor entertaining, and one which would, one feels, have appeared in other times as the publication of a historical society at much the same price, but with a less decorative wrapper.

ROGER MORGAN.

## A GREAT MOUNTAINEER

MEMOIRS OF A MOUNTAINEER. By F. Spencer Chapman, D.S.O. *Chatto and Windus*. 16s.

THIS is not a new book, but a reprint in one volume of *Helvellyn to Himalaya* and *The Holy City*, and it is odd that the author, a Himalayan explorer and member of the Alpine Club, should have left uncorrected the knighthood which only he bestowed on Douglas Freshfield of Himalayan and Alpine Club fame.

The author learned to ski in Davos, where he made the first ascent of the copper statue of a naked man in the big park. He painted the statue scarlet, and when his colour scheme was criticised repainted it white and was arrested and fined thirty pounds, which was paid with the help of sympathetic friends.

The second of these books is an interesting account of a visit to Lhasa on a political mission, and the first the story of his mountaineering adventures and his various voyages of exploration in Greenland and the Himalayas. The author, who invariably writes with restraint and modesty of his great achievements, must have been very cross when he read the blurb in which the publishers describe his ascent of Chomolhari (24,000 ft.) as "a feat of mountaineering which has never been surpassed." It would be a pity if an exaggerated claim biased any reader against what is certainly one of the most remarkable examples of survival under conditions of extreme peril. In his book *The Jungle is Neutral* Mr. Chapman some-

where remarks that most of those who died in the course of underground work in the jungle died because they had lost the determination to live. Those who have lived through mountain nights of storm in the open know that there comes a point where it is easier to die than to live, a point where survival is the reward of courage. "Survival" would be a good theme for an anthology, and in such an anthology Mr. Chapman's story of Chomolhari would have an honoured place.

On May 16, 1937, Chapman and Charles Crawford and porters crossed, and on the 25th Chapman recrossed, the snow-line. The days between were spent on the mountain, Crawford having returned from one of the higher camps. On May 20 they were caught in a blizzard, and for two hours could not move up or down. They camped with immense difficulty, after cutting away the ice below an overhanging *serac*. On May 21 Chapman and the porter, Pasang, reached the summit.

On the descent of the summit slope Pasang fell, and dragged Chapman with him. Pasang was unnerved and let go his axe, but Chapman grimly clung to his axe, and by keeping its point in the snow just managed to stop before the edge of a precipice. His vivid description of this episode recalled a similar experience of my own. At such moments gravity seems like a ferocious animal which is trying to throw one, and one's axe like a knife which one has just managed to thrust into the great beast's hide. At first the beast seems invincible, heaving below one, and it is only with immense difficulty that one keeps the knife in his hide, but gradually his strength ebbs and one drives the knife home, and finally with a last quiver the great beast dies, and one finds oneself motionless and alive, and still gasping with the violence of the struggle.

Some distance below the summit they were overtaken by a blizzard and forced, at that great height where every step upwards is a toil, to re-ascend 300 feet.

That climb of a mere 300 feet back to our ledge is one of the most dreadful memories I have. Each single step required a concentration of will-power I was scarcely capable



of exerting. The idea of just letting go and sliding over the ice-fall into the oblivion of the gaping *bergschund* below was terribly attractive.

They endured a terrible night, for the sleeping-bags were soaked by melted snow. Next day heavy snow forced them to camp at midday, "I have never known anything like those six nights passed in our bivouac tent on the snows of Chomolhari."

On May 24, Pasang's inept handling of the rope dragged Chapman back, as he tried to jump a crevasse, and he fell 30 feet. He hung there, the rope nearly squeezing the life out of him. Incidentally, it is always a matter of astonishment to me that experienced climbers tie themselves on to the end of the rope, instead of leaving enough slack to make a loop in which to support the foot if they fall into a crevasse. Chapman managed, after many attempts, to swing himself onto a little ledge, and to cut away enough of this ledge to stand. It has always been deemed impossible for

a man to get out of a crevasse by cutting steps up a nearly vertical wall, but Chapman achieved the impossible, aided, of course, by the rope from above.

I had to descend to my ledge several times for every step I cut, and holds which were shaped for my fingers to grip soon got broken by my clumsy boots and had to be recut. The ice was of that peculiar tough glutinous kind so often found in the Himalayas. Another difficulty was that I could not make Pasang understand when to steady me with a pull and when to let go, so that I could descend to my ledge. It was only after three or four hours of most exacting work that I at last put my head over the lip of the crevasse where I saw to my horror that Pasang was sitting in the very middle of the frail snow bridge not six feet away from the gaping hole through which I had recently disappeared.

Two comments on this expedition must be quoted. The first by General Bruce, who referred to Chapman's safe return as "the Eighth Wonder of the World," and the second by Pasang. "I lost all love for my body, but the sahib brought it back safely and I hope we shall climb another mountain together."

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## Novels

THE VILLAGE. Marghanita Laski. *Cresset Press*. 12s. 6d.

CATHERINE CARTER. Pamela Hansford Johnson. *Macmillan*. 12s. 6d.

CAST A COLD EYE. Mary McCarthy. *Heinemann*. 9s. 6d.

PANORAMA. Phyllis Bentley. *Gollancz*. 12s. 6d.

THE GOLDEN DAGGER. E. R. Punshon. *Gollancz*. 9s. 6d.

IN *The Village*, Miss Marghanita Laski has set herself, consciously, the difficult task of showing two English institutions, the village and the class system, in decline. The social interest inevitably tends to outweigh the human interest, which is the love affair between the daughter of a retired army officer and the son of a van driver

## NOVELS

who is doing very well in the printing trade. Neither Margaret nor Roy is in any way outstanding; their mutual attraction is the outcome of a propinquity which would not have been possible fifty years ago. The book is full of amusing comedy, shades of snobbery deftly observed: but the prospects of tragedy are neatly brushed aside. The implication is that all will be well with Roy and Margaret, once the outworn prejudices of their forbears are got out of the way, and this implication is, in general terms, fallacious. Both the village and the class system may be in decline, but their roots are tenacious; and if they are finally eradicated, what will grow in their place: the classless society or the American grading by income and material possessions? You know the answer and so does Miss Laski.

*Catherine Carter* is a brave endeavour to rescue the novel of entertainment from the slough into which mass production on the one hand and esoteric criticism on the other have thrust it. Miss Hansford Johnson has made clever use of some of the characteristics of Henry Irving for her study of Henry Peverell, the Victorian actor who is the chief male character of the book: but in her preface she points out that the book is to be considered simply as a love story. Catherine first appears as a young girl, the niece of a popular playwright, who is given a small part in Henry Peverell's company. The theme of the novel is not merely the vicissitudes of Catherine's growing love for Henry—his relations with other women, her own marriage to a young actor with an emotional predilection for his own sex, the Victorian horror of divorce and so on. It is also Catherine's struggle to make her lover realise that he is not reduced but enlarged by recognition of her own quality as an actress. I at least did not feel that Catherine was essentially an actress in the same way that Henry, essentially, was an actor. The trappings of Irving are still as potent as this. I feel that Catherine would always give an "intelligent" performance, but that she did not have that intense animal magnetism, beyond intelligence, beyond even beauty, which every surpassing

performer must have; the quality which, as in Irving's case, and Henry's case, is proof against almost every aberration of judgment and taste. Catherine, like Mr. Dennis Lane Belfour, the young producer who anticipates Granville Barker by some twenty years in the novel, is a shade too modern for the context. As a girl in love, however, she is entirely convincing; you feel her hovering in the wings, at once eager and proud; watching the house where Peverell is visiting; waiting in Venice for the lover who is so tardy in coming. There are some brilliant minor portraits; Willy Palliser, Henry Peverell's stage manager, sly, accommodating, anxious to please, but unable to resist the use of knowledge as power; Catherine's mother, with her mixture of affection, affectation and calculation, are two of the best. A very large number of people will enjoy this novel; it is firmly conceived and straightforwardly written; it is not afraid of emotion or of coloured writing. It is,

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Miss Mary McCarthy's cold eye is the antithesis of Miss Hansford Johnson's warm and glancing vision. Her justly celebrated style is flawless; her stories are animated cartoons of perfect draughtsmanship, illuminating something which is subtle, sad, or wryly funny, but not very important. There is Francis Cleary the man who has no personality of his own; there is the woman who could never make an effective gesture; there is the Italian whose virility has been debased with his country's currency, but whose essence yet eludes his bright American investigators. Two childhood stories at the end are less brittle but *Cast a Cold Eye* seems to me a book only satisfying to connoisseurs of verbal technique.

Miss Bentley's *Panorama* is a collection of pieces written to illustrate life in the West Riding of Yorkshire, from the sixteenth century when the wool men were rising in importance, to the present day.

Her aim is to impart information rather than to provoke an æsthetic response: but she never fails to hold the attention or to elicit a thoughtful consideration, just as Frith will always attract his quota of observers in a picture gallery even if Picasso is hung beside him.

E. R. Punshon's detective story has an excellent beginning. An anonymous telephone call warns the police that murder has been committed; the instrument of the crime, a blood-stained dagger, is found in the call box. The corpse, however, is elusive and only Superintendent Bobby Owen's pertinacity succeeds in establishing the fact that there is a corpse at all. His temper got rather frayed during the investigation, so that I concluded that he did not enjoy coping with so many people masquerading as somebody else any more than I did. But when the corpse is at last unearthed, the pace quickens and works up to a good rousing end.

RUBY MILLAR.

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shall be a good discharge for such legacy.

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

**A**MONG the important books about the last war *The Struggle for Europe* (Collins, 25s.) by Chester Wilmot takes a very high place. It tells the story of how Hitler was defeated, and also "of how Stalin emerged the real victor." Mr. Wilmot was an eye-witness of many of the operations he describes, and he has been given facilities for research and interrogation both by General Eisenhower and Field-Marshal Lord Montgomery. *The Struggle for Europe* is a most vivid and engrossing book. It will be reviewed at length in the next issue of *The National and English Review* by the Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee, O.M., C.H., M.P.

\* \* \*

It is not easy to describe *Venture to the Interior* (Hogarth Press, 12s. 6d.), by Colonel Laurent van der Post. Ostensibly it is the account of a journey made by the author, at the request of the British Government, to investigate little-known territory in Nyasaland. Colonel van der Post's literary gifts are remarkable. His experience of people and places is vast and varied. Although not exactly an adventure story, a travel book, or a piece of intimate autobiography, *Venture to the Interior* is a blend of all three. There is no doubt that this will be one of the outstanding books of 1952.

\* \* \*

I have always found John Evelyn so much less attractive than Samuel Pepys that I welcome any opportunity of learning more Evelyn in the hope that I may correct an impression which I feel to be unfair. *John Evelyn and Mrs. Godolphin* (Macmillan, 20s.), by W. G. Hiscock is a most engaging piece of literary history taken from real life. It confirms the author's opinion that while Pepys is loved for his defects, we have to dig deep to discover Evelyn's virtues. Mr. Hiscock's agreeable study makes this an easy process.

\* \* \*

*Crisis in English Poetry: 1880-1940* (Hutchinson, 7s. 6d.) by Professor V. de S. Pinto, is an interesting and provocative addition to Hutchinson's University Library. The author writes that "the great achievement of English poetry in the period surveyed in this study is that it has remained alive in a world which has become increasingly hostile to all the values for which the poet stands." On the face of it this seems to be a reasonable conclusion, but it is not impossible that every poet since Homer has felt exactly the same about the times in which he lived.

\* \* \*

*Shakespeare Memorial Theatre: 1948-1950* (Reinhardt & Evans, 15s.), A Photographic Record, with forewords by Ivor Brown and Anthony Quayle, is a delightful souvenir of three important seasons in the history of the Stratford-upon-Avon theatre. Building upon the foundations laid by Sir Barry Jackson and his distinguished predecessors, Mr. Quayle has brought youth, energy and great ability to his directorial work. Success has been achieved and there is promise of bigger things to come. Until Stratford and the Old Vic., jointly or independently, cover the world with theatrical companies acting Shakespeare's plays, it can never be said that we are making the fullest use of one of our most valuable exports.

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# RECORD REVIEW

By ALEC ROBERTSON

**O**PERA again tops the bill this month with an L.P. recording of *La Bohème* which makes gramophone history, for in it not just one or two of the singers, but all of them, seem to be putting Puccini's music before individual vocal prowess. It is a rare delight to hear operatic singing so full of light and shade, and of so intelligent an appreciation of the dramatic situation. To be hypercritical, it might be objected that Inghilleri is too old to give the part of Marcello the youthful zest it requires: but his characterisation is most sympathetic, and he rises well to the vocal demands of the duet with Rodolfo at the start of the last act. We have grown only too well accustomed to hearing the part of Musetta oversung and overacted, sometimes grossly, so that one wonders why on

earth Marcello should have become enamoured of such a shrew: but Hilda Grueden departs from this bad tradition, and only puts an edge into her voice when it is really called for, as in the quarrelsome passages of the quartet in the third act. She sings her famous *aria* in the second act with such a sensuous beauty of tone that one can well understand Marcello being so attracted by her. Prandelli gives one of the best performances of Rodolfo's part that I have ever heard. It is wonderful to hear such sensitive and such finely controlled singing as this, and worth any number of loud high C's!

The Mimi of Renata Tebaldi, though very well sung, is once or twice a little out of character; her death scene, for example, would have been more touching if

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## RECORD REVIEW

acted, vocally, more simply. The orchestral playing, lively and unfailingly excellent, is not always clearly recorded, and the microphone is sometimes unkind to Tebaldi's high notes. This most successful issue owes not a few of its many merits to the fact that it has been produced with real imagination for the unaided ear, and nowhere suggests a bunch of singers round the microphone in a studio. I most warmly recommend it. (Decca LXT2622-3.)

The rich heritage of English choral music has so far been little drawn upon by the recording companies, and it is to be hoped that the issue of two fine works, one of the past, one of the present, is a sign of the times.

First we have a well chosen selection from Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, sung by three excellent American artists and chorus, with the small orchestra—which includes two harpsichords—conducted by Daniel Pinkham, a composer and one-time pupil of Nadia Boulanger. The interpretation is perfectly to scale, and the recording, which is admirable, consists of two 10-inch L.P. discs, with the imprint of a firm new to me. (Allegro A.L.Y.60.) The other work is the *Pastoral* "Lie strewn the flocks," by Arthur Bliss, a setting of poems by Ben Jonson, John Fletcher, Poliziano, Theocritus and Robert Nichols, for mezzo-soprano (Nancy Evans), flute (Gareth Morris), chorus and orchestra (B.B.C. Chorus, and Reginald Jacques and his orchestra). This lovely work, which comes to us under the auspices of the British Council, is the best Bliss, which means it is very good indeed, and the performance

and recording are worthy of it; although the balance between choir and orchestra is not as good as one could wish. (Decca AX565-8.)

Handel's oratorios, with a few exceptions, are now so rarely performed that the present generation can have no idea what treasures they contain. Most welcome, therefore, are two of his marvellous studies of old age. These are Caleb's air from *Joshua*, "Shall I in Mamre's fertile plain," and Manoah's air from *Samson*, "How willing my paternal love," both of which are nobly sung, in German, by Hans Hotter, accompanied by the Philharmonia Orchestra under Weldon. (Columbia LX1516.)

Nectar and caviare are represented by Schubert's heavenly C major string quartet, finely played by the Hollywood string quartet and Kurt Reher (cello), and quite well recorded on Capitol C.T.L.7011, and *Bachianas Brasileiras* No. 1 for eight 'cellos, and *Chôros* Nos. 4 and 7 for various combinations of instruments, by Villa-Lobos, on Capitol C.T.L.7014. Marvellous playing and recording, but to be heard before purchase!

Recommended orchestral discs are *Siegfried's Funeral Music* (Furtwängler and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra: H.M.V. DB6946). Handel's fifth and sixth Concerti Grossi (Boyd Neel and his Orchestra: Decca LX3055). Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*: Clifford Curzon and the New Symphony Orchestra. Dances from *The Three Cornered Hat*, London Symphony Orchestra, both conducted by Jorda. (Decca LXT2621.)

ALEC ROBERTSON.

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